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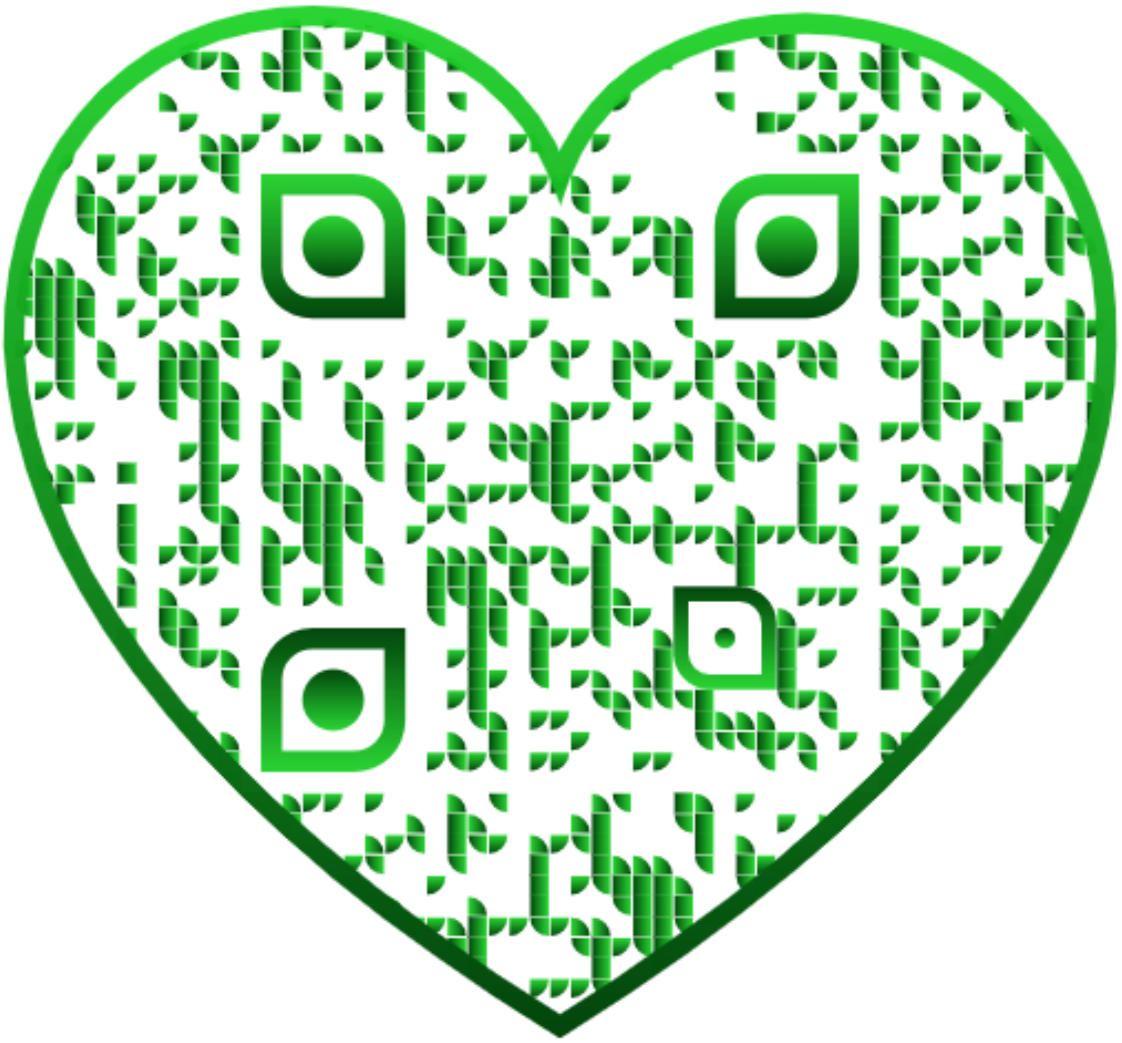

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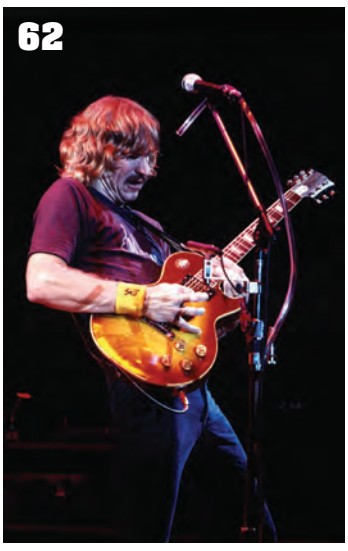

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MUSIC LEGENDS

Editor Harriet Carruthers
harriet@musiclegendsmagazine.co.uk

Subscriptions
Warners Group Publications plc.
subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

Advertising Adrian Clay
adrian@musiclegendsmagazine.co.uk

Reviews and Gigs
info@musiclegendsmagazine.co.uk

Design Matt Hicks

Podcasts Steve Averill

Publisher
Coda Publishing Ltd.
Office Suite 3,
Shrieves Walk,
Sheep Street,
Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire,
CV37 6GJ

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Welcome to Music Legends the interactive magazine for music lovers. Music Legends brings the magic of the digital age to the world of music magazines.

Just as the title suggests, Music Legends features a great range of articles featuring new insights into the biggest names in the history of rock music. Sure, the music is powerful, but so too are the tales of the darker underside of fame and fortune; the booze, the fights, artistic differences, the drugs, the splits, the lawsuits, the politics and so much more. With Music Legends there is a whole new digital dimension for you to enjoy. Today, the modern reader is no longer limited to simply what can be conveyed on the printed page, so check out what treats are on offer inside this issue below.

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To complement the features in this issue you'll find exclusive video content featuring Queen on Freddie Mercury with interviews of Freddie's mum and his sister, Linda Ronstadt on the birth of the Eagles, Angie Bowie on the early days of David Bowie, and U2 reflecting on the ups and downs of starting out on the road to fame.

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Our dedicated Music Legends YouTube channel also brings you free access to fantastic concert films and exclusive documentaries. In conjunction with Coda Publishing Ltd we are proud to offer exclusive performance footage from the music icons featured in Music Legends Magazine. To access this exclusive content simply visit our channel by **clicking here**.

As a counterpoint to this issue's *The Dark Side of the Moon* feature we are proud to present an exclusive performance of *The Music of Pink Floyd Arranged for Chamber Orchestra* and performed by the London Symphonia.

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H. Carruthers

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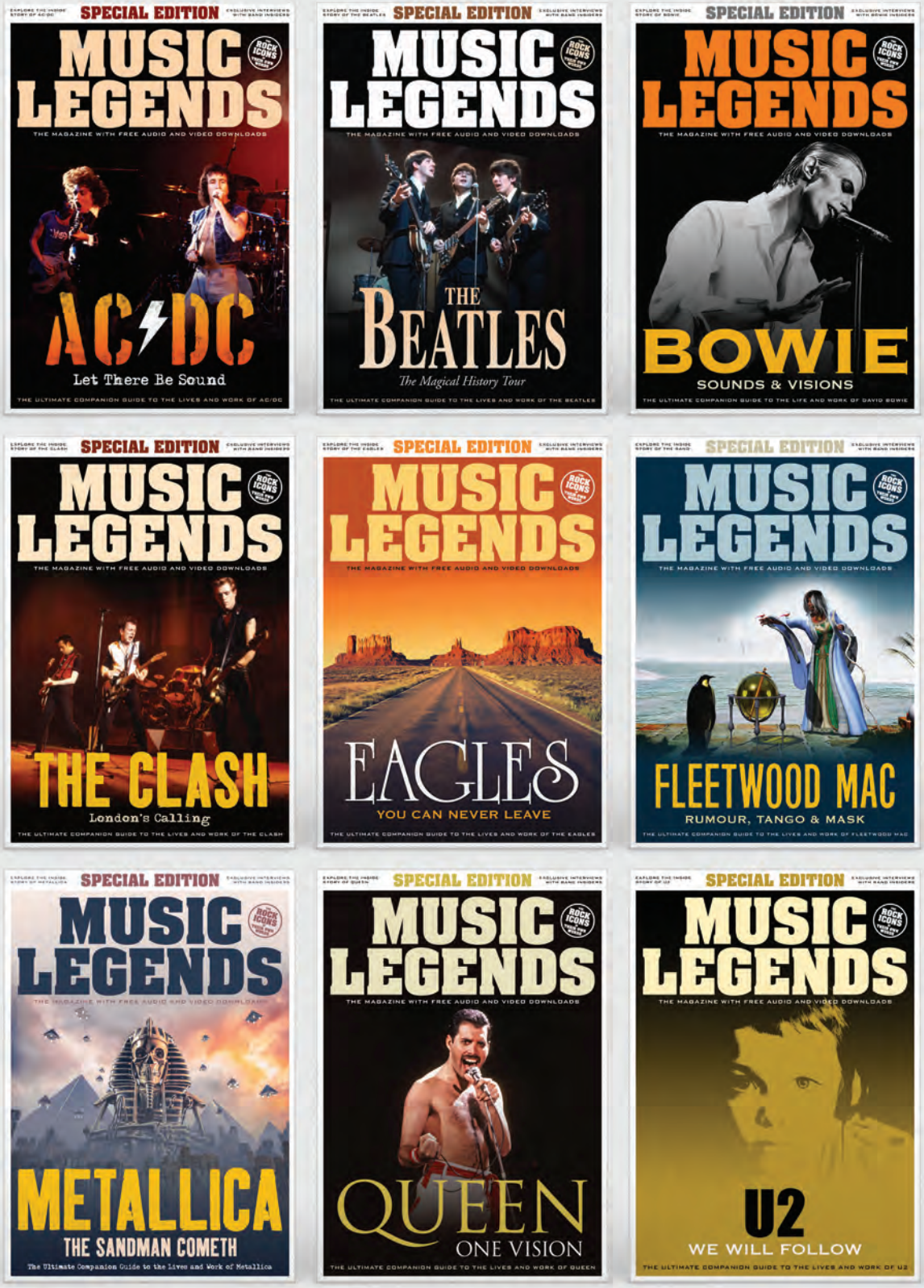

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QUEEN

A Bohemian Rhapsody

One of the most flamboyant, outrageous and best-loved bands of all time – Queen is nothing if not bold. It is this boldness that made the band superstars, and secured a legacy that sees them selling out arenas to this day. Here we look the story of Queen from their infancy to the release of the classic album *A Night at the Opera*.

On 5 September 1946, Jer Bulsara gave birth to a handsome baby boy in Zanzibar, an African Island situated just off the coast of mainland Tanzania. Farrokh Bulsara was the first of two children born to Jer and her husband Bomi, a civil servant working for the British government. Living a fairly restricted childhood, Farrokh stated years later, 'I was a very insecure young boy, probably because I was a bit sheltered.'

Raised a Zoroastrian, a devotee of a philosophical religion based upon the idea of one true Creator, Farrokh (also known as Freddie) grew up alongside his sister Kashmira, and the two of them, along with their parents, moved to India when he was just seven years old. They were later educated at an English boarding school near Bombay, and finally moved to England when Freddie was seventeen, as a result of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution.

Nearly 5,000 miles away in England – long before Freddie had even set foot on its green and hallowed land – three other boys were born between the years 1947 and 1951. Brian Harold May was born at Gloucester House Nursing Home to Ruth and Harold May, and soon became fascinated by the music industry: 'When I was a boy, we used to play a lot in the lunch hour in the cycle sheds. We weren't allowed to play in the school 'cos rock music was unacceptable, not cultural, so it was kind of underground. We'd go and see bands around Richmond and Twickenham, and I saw people like the Yardbirds, the Stones and Clapton at the local club – they were really hot news!'

Roger Taylor was born on 26 July 1949, in King's Lynn, Norfolk, and also recalled an early fascination with music, reminiscing, 'I remember when I was a really young kid, I was inspired by Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, all the really early rockers. I didn't even have a record player at the time! My cousin had one though. Later on, my big all-time heroes became: Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon and Bob Dylan. Archetypal influences I suppose, but why not?'

Three years later, on 19 August 1951, John Deacon was born in Leicestershire, completing the foursome that would become one of the biggest British rock bands of all time. The seeds of Queen had been sown, and this is their story…

John Deacon and Freddie Mercury setting out on the road to superstardom.

As a young man Roger Taylor formed a band called Johnny Quale and the Reaction. The future Queen drummer travelled the length and breadth of the country with his band, competing in various talent contests. Eventually they downsized their name to Reaction, and became a constant on the music scene throughout the mid-1960s.

At the same time, Brian May had taken inspiration from author George Orwell, and was playing in a band named after one of Orwell's most famous novels – *1984*. They enjoyed even more success than Taylor's Reaction, played sold out gigs across the country, and even picked up a support slot with Jimi Hendrix in 1967. Unfortunately this success was short lived as conflicts within the band meant they split soon after.

Queen's soon-to-be bassist John Deacon, was also in a mildly successful band at the time, and with Deacon's group getting booked most weekends in The New Opposition, it was clear that all three artists were on the rise.

In 1966, Brian May was busy studying for a degree in astronomy at Imperial College in London. As well as performing with 1984, May was playing in a band called Smile with singer and bassist Tim Staffell; a band that Taylor also joined after answering an advert on a notice board at the Imperial College.

Freddie Bulsara was Staffell's roommate at the time, and followed Smile closely – turning up to rehearsals as well as most of the band's gigs. At the time, Freddie was also big on the scene in his own right, singing with the likes of Ibex and Wreckage. Freddie was becoming closer and closer with the Smile boys – as Staffell drifted further and further apart from them – and it wasn't long before Staffell decided that Smile was not for him, and Freddie was brought in as lead singer in his place. Smile also began the long search for a new bass player, initially settling on Barry Mitchell. Freddie quickly stamped his authority on the band, changing the band's name from Smile to Queen, stating, 'Years ago I thought up the name Queen… it's just a name, but it's very regal and it sounds splendid. It's a strong name, very universal and immediate. It had a lot of visual potential and was open to all sorts of interpretations. I was certainly aware of the gay connotations, but that was just one facet of it.' Deciding his own name also needed a makeover, Freddie Bulsara found inspiration for a new one when writing the song *My Fairy King*, which contains a verse with the lyrics 'Mother Mercury, look what they've done to me.' Bulsara was quick to latch on to Mercury as a name, and subsequently took the stage name Freddie Mercury; a name better suiting the stage persona that Freddie described as an 'extroverted monster'.

When bassist John Deacon joined the group in 1972, the band was finally complete. Queen began to rehearse for their first full-length release – the eponymously titled *Queen* – but struggled to find a label to market the finished product. Roger Taylor later recalled the trying time reflecting, 'We had quite a difficult genesis. It was very difficult for us to get a contract, to be accepted in any way. But many groups went through that, and it does engineer a kind of "backs to the wall" feeling in a band. So we felt very strong together.'

When they were eventually picked up by EMI, it had been eight months since Queen had completed their debut album; by which point the group had almost grown out of it. Years later, Brian May talked about the lengthy process, stating, 'The album took ages and ages – two years in total, in the preparation, making and then trying to get the thing released.'

The press barely paid any attention to Queen at first, yet the album did succeed in giving the band their first radio hit through *Keep Yourself Alive*, which, as Mercury himself remarked '… was a very good way of telling people what Queen was about in those days.'

A mixture of mostly Led Zeppelin inspired rocking numbers, as well as a hint of glam rock, *Queen* slowly bubbled

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Queen in 1976. From left: Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon.

under the radar, and the album was passed over by the critics and the band alike. Roger Taylor, for example, recently recalled, 'There were lots of things on the first album I don't like, for example the drum sound. There are parts of it which may sound contrived but it is very varied and it has lots of energy.'

Touring the album in support of Mott the Hoople, Brian May quickly became infatuated with the glam-rockers from Hertfordshire, England, and there are clear signs of the band's influence throughout his own writing career.

In 1974, Queen quickly followed up the small success of their first studio outing with two new releases, the first of which was *Queen II*, featuring hit single *Seven Seas of Rhye*. The album garnered the band a plethora of new fans, and despite the album as a whole being highly experimental and gaining little critical acclaim, *Seven Seas of Rhye* went to No. 5 in the charts, and Queen were more than pleased with the results.

Reflecting on the success of *Queen II* Roger Taylor remarked, 'We took so much trouble over that album, possibly too much, but when we finished we felt really proud. Immediately it got really bad reviews, so I took it home to listen to and thought, "Christ, are they right?" But after hearing it a few weeks later, I still like it. I think it's great. We'll stick by it. Considering the abuse we've had lately, I'm surprised that the new LP has done so well. I suppose it's basically because people like the band.' Speaking a few years later Taylor added that, 'It's very difficult to choose one album I prefer out of all of them. But I do like a lot of the work on the second album, second side. It all runs into one – very epic. Musically it's quite daring because we did lots of counter seven part harmonies and things.'

"I thought up the name Queen… it's just a name, but it's very regal, and it sounds splendid. It's a strong name, very universal and immediate."

Freddie Mercury

Later that same year, the third studio album *Sheer Heart Attack* was released. *Killer Queen* – the first single – proved to be the album's standout track, and a major jumping-off point for the band. Shooting into the Top 10 of the UK Single Charts, as well as peaking at No. 11 in the US Billboard Single Charts, the track combined the Led Zeppelin-esque sound of their first two albums, along with Mercury's grandiose music hall stylings. Brian May quickly picked up on the track's importance: '*Killer Queen* in 1974, was the turning point. It was the song that best summed up our kind of music, and a big hit, and we desperately needed it as a mark of

something successful happening to us. We were penniless, you know. Just like another struggling rock 'n' roll band. All sitting around in London bedsits, just like the rest.'

Sheer Heart Attack proved to be a big success all over Europe, and even managed to go gold in the United States – a sure sign that Queen was a band to be watched. Speaking about the album, John Deacon commented, 'I have the feeling that the whole thing is getting a bit more professional all round. We are, after all, on our third album. I've got more confidence in the group now than ever before. I was possibly the one person who could look at it from the outside because I was the fourth person to join the band. I knew there was something there but I wasn't so convinced of it. Till possibly this album.'

Mercury expanded on this after harsher critics described the album as nothing more than a collection of singles, in spite of it generally being seen as a cohesive long-player with a wide variety of musical genres, including ballads, ragtime and heavy metal: 'Not a collection of singles, dear – although we might draw another one off later for a single. I'm not absolutely sure about that, though. No, not all the numbers last for ages. There were just so many songs we wanted to do. And it makes a change to have short numbers. It's so varied that we were able to go to extremes. I only had about two weeks to write my songs so we've been working fucking hard.'

It was at this point that Queen started to make a name for themselves with their onstage theatrics, in particular those of front man Freddie Mercury, who had fast become a remarkable entertainer – dressing in satin, sequins and leaping all over the place.

Following the dismissal of Norman Sheffield, the follow-up to *Sheer Heart Attack* arrived a year later under new management. The opening track of *A Night at the Opera*, *Death On Two Legs*, proved to be a reference to the whole sordid affair, and Mercury later stated, 'As far as Queen are concerned our old management is deceased. They cease to exist in any capacity with us whatsoever. One leaves them behind like one leaves excreta. We feel so relieved!' Queen's new manager was John Reid, who also handled Elton John's career at the time – an artist that the band later collaborated with.

Considered by many to be the band's strongest ever outing, *A Night at the Opera* featured what is also widely considered to be the group's greatest ever

Released on 21 November 1975, *A Night at the Opera* was the fourth studio album from Queen. This was the release that launched Queen in to superstardom, and provided the band with their first UK No. 1 in the form of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Freddie Mercury personally designed the band logo featured on the cover, which is typically overstated and regal, whilst a Marx Brothers film of the same name inspired the title of the album. Widely regarded as Queen's magnum opus, *A Night at the Opera* was justifiably the most expensive album ever recorded at the time of its release.

Death On Two Legs (Dedicated to...)
A hate song aimed at Queen's ex-manager, *Death On Two Legs* is a snarling rocker, opening this classic album up with an admirable bang – 'You're just a sewer rat decaying in a cess-pool of pride.'

Lazing On a Sunday Afternoon
The Mercury penned *Lazing On a Sunday Afternoon* is the polar episode to *Death On Two Legs*, switching mood to one of over-the-top silliness. *Lazing On a Sunday Afternoon* shows Mercury's penchant for songs about high society to good effect.

I'm In Love with My Car
A Roger Taylor stalwart, *I'm In Love with My Car* also features Taylor on lead vocals. Filling in the gaps with squealing race-car impersonations on his guitar, May's work is admirable here. It should come as no surprise that this was a live favourite for many, many years.

You're My Best Friend
John Deacon's first credited single – *You're My Best Friend* is a song written for his wife, with piano and overdubbed bass lines. A simple, yet beautiful song of love and devotion, with some great electric piano.

'39
An acoustic number, *'39* features Brian May on lead vocals, and really showcases his talents to great effect. 'Sci-fi skittle' in nature, the track also features some pretty good double bass from Deacon. 'In the land that our grandchildren knew...'

Sweet Lady
'You call me up and feed me all the lines, You call me sweet like I'm some kind of cheese, Waiting on the shelf, You eat me up, You hold me down, I'm just a fool to make you a home.' A Brain May penned heavy metal track, *Sweet Lady* is loud and riff-heavy. Nothing spectacular, this is regarded by many as the album's worst track.

Seaside Rendezvous
With their voices alone, Taylor and Mercury imitate piccolos, flutes, trumpets and tubas on this one. They also imitate tap dancing sounds with their fingers. Ridiculously innovative, *Seaside Rendezvous* is another Mercury high society track.

The Prophet's Song
A Brian May epic: *The Prophet's Song* features some stunning guitar work, and complicated production. Multi-layered and multi-tracked all over the place, this track still doesn't feel too over-produced. Well thought through.

Love of My Life
One of Mercury's most covered songs, *Love of My Life* is a tender piano and harpsichord number, influenced by Chopin and Beethoven.

Good Company
With vocals and ukelele by May, *Good Company* is another Brian May classic to rival *The Prophet's Song*. The jazz break at the end involved the complex recording of May's guitar in every possible way imaginable. The lyrics, too, are particularly poignant here.

Bohemian Rhapsody
The crown jewel track of (arguably) Queen's crown jewel album, *Bohemian Rhapsody* couldn't get anything other than five stars. In the style of a rock opera, and with the most unusual structure for a piece of popular music, the track's six different sections feature both a cappella and heavy metal arrangements. Nothing short of incredible. 'Shall we do the fandango?'

God Save the Queen
A possible homage to Jimi Hendrix's version of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Overt. Pure Queen excess.

In real life Freddie was rather shy and introverted. He described his on-stage alter ego as 'an extroverted monster'. Queen are seen here on stage in March 1977.

track in form of the massive worldwide hit, *Bohemian Rhapsody*. The song reached No. 1 all over Europe, and even hit the Top 10 in the United States. *Bohemian Rhapsody* earned Mercury an Ivor Novello award, was promoted by a revolutionary music video, and is the second most played song on British radio. Years later, Mercury tried to explain the appeal of the track reflecting, 'It's one of those songs which has such a fantasy feel about it. I think people should just listen to it, think about it, and then make up their own minds as to what it says to them. *Bohemian Rhapsody* didn't just come out of thin air. I did a bit of research although it was tongue-in-cheek and mock opera. Why not?'

The album also featured another major hit in John Deacon's, *You're My Best Friend*. Peaking at No. 14 in America, it was unlike anything Queen had done up to this point, and proved to be a forerunner for the myriad hits that the band became famous for. Deacon later talked about how Mercury originally hated the track, especially the Wurlitzer organ that the bassist had composed it on, stating, 'Well, Freddie didn't like the electric piano, so I took it home and I started to learn on the electric piano and basically that's the song that came out you know when I was learning to play piano. It was written on that instrument and it sounds best on that. You know, often on the instrument that you wrote the song on.'

Throughout this period, the band spent much of their time promoting and gigging the album, including a huge free gig at Hyde Park in front of over 150,000 people. Brian May later ruminated on the concert's importance to the band remarking, 'I think that Hyde Park was one of the most significant gigs in our career. There was a great affection because we'd kind of made it in a lot of countries by that time, but England was still, you know, we weren't really sure if we were really acceptable here. So it was a wonderful feeling to come back and see that crowd and get that response.'

A commercial and critical smash hit, *A Night at the Opera* went three times platinum in the United States, and this success, as well as playing sold out venues all over the world, proved that Queen had finally made it big on the popular music scene.

This article is an extract from **One Vision**, the Queen Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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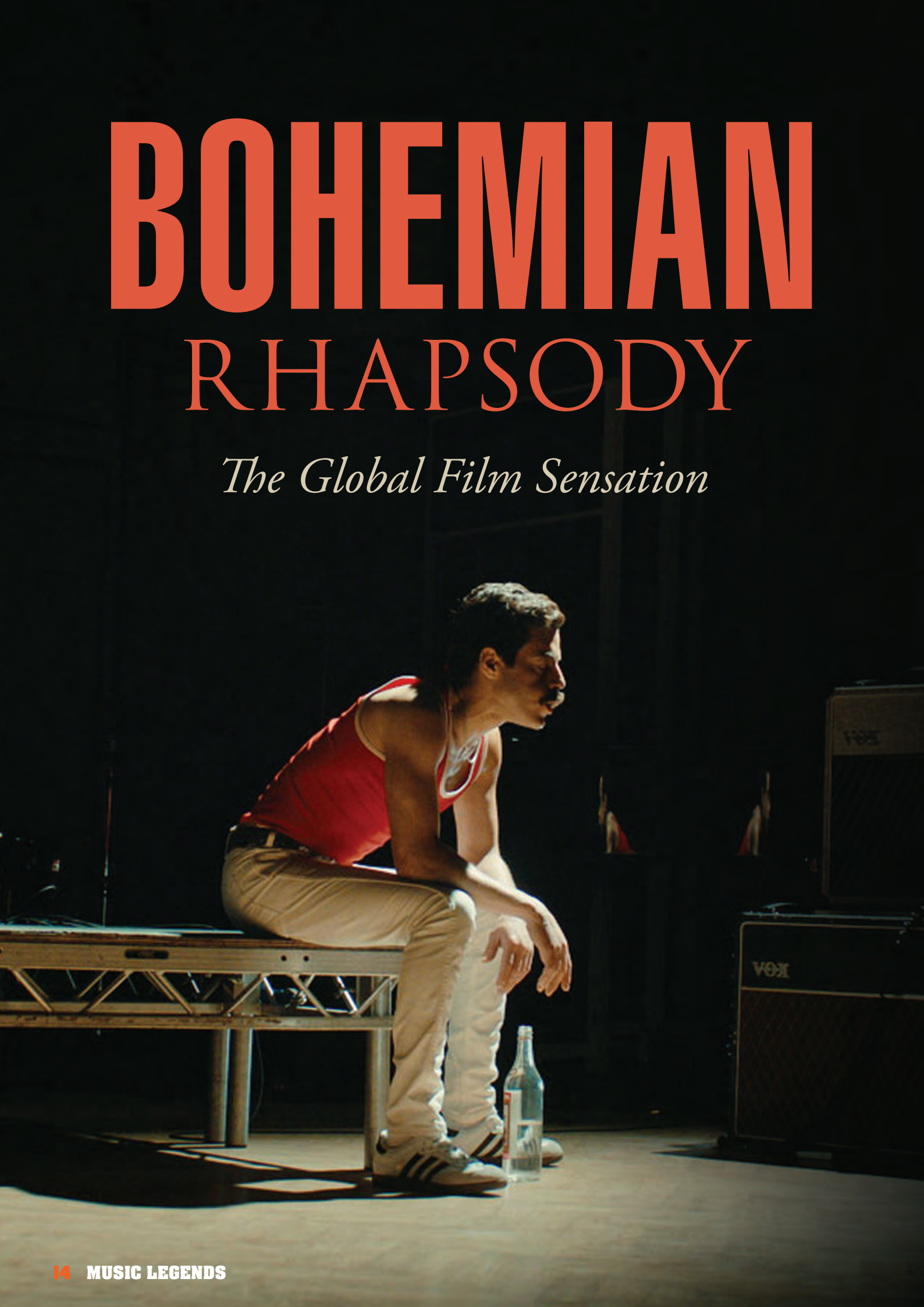

Released in October 2018, *Bohemian Rhapsody* has been proving a controversial hit ever since.

The British/American venture was initially announced back in 2010, with *Borat* star Sacha Baron Cohen attached to play Mercury. Unfortunately this partnership was short lived with Baron Cohen soon leaving due to creative differences. It was speculated at the time that this is due to disagreements with the band members of Queen, who had both script and director approval, and in particular with Brian May, whose opinion he disagreed with regarding the direction of the film. Baron Cohen later flamed the fires of this apparent feud stating that he considered Brian May to be an 'amazing musician [but] not a great movie producer.'

Although he declined to point out any one figure as the root of the difficulties, Baron Cohen did elaborate that, 'A member of the band – I won't say who – said, "You know, this is such a great movie because it's got such an amazing thing that happens in the middle of the movie." And I go, "What happens in the middle of the movie?" He goes, "You know, Freddie dies." … I go, "What happens in the second half of the movie?" He goes, "We see how the band carries on from strength to strength." I said, "Listen, not one person is going to a movie where the lead character dies from AIDS and then you carry on to see how the band carries on."'

The acrimony did not end there, with Queen hitting out at Baron Cohen, stating that it was in fact their decision to let the star go from the project. When questioned about the departure Roger Taylor remarked, 'We felt Sacha probably wasn't right in the end. We didn't want it to be a joke. We want people to be moved.' Brian May also added that he had found the comedy star to be 'distracting'.

English actor Ben Wishaw was brought in as a replacement lead in 2013; however there seemed to be a degree of confusion surrounding this appointment. Despite Brian May expressing his enthusiasm for the casting dubbing Wishaw 'a real actor', there was no official contract signed and Wishaw himself was quoted back in 2014 by *Time Out* saying, 'I don't know what's happening, it seems to be on a back burner.'

"Like Queen, Bohemian Rhapsody is three parts good but not terribly exciting, and one part absolute joyful, fabulous entertainment that makes you forget everything else around it."

Olly Richards – Empire

It proved to be another two years before Bohemian Rhapsody finally found the star they were looking for in the form of popular American actor Rami Malek. Known for his breakthrough role on the television series *Mr. Robot*, Malek proved to be the perfect man to play Mercury, bringing the star power such a large production requires, and the acting chops to portray the nuanced eccentricities of the Queen front man.

Changes to the cast were by no means the only problems faced during the production of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, with departures behind the scenes also having a huge impact on the picture. Director Brian Singer was fired from the film in December 2017, after reports of clashes with the cast and other crewmembers. Director Dexter Fletcher had been involved in the film's early production, and was brought in to complete the title after Singer became 'unexpectedly unavailable'. Singer had already overseen the majority of the principal photography for the picture, and in Fletcher's hands filming finally wrapped up in January 2018 – an astonishing eight years since its announcement.

The critical reception to *Bohemian Rhapsody* has been mixed. There was high praise for Malek's performance in the role of Freddie Mercury, and the huge musical numbers were lauded for their impressive effects, however many critics found the plot to be lacking and disliked the

apparently 'sanitized' version of Mercury that the film portrayed.

Despite the foot-stomping musical numbers, critics and LGBT activists were concerned about the straightwashing of Mercury's personal life in the film. It seemed to many that the star's sexuality was overly downplayed and that the picture was not an accurate portrayal as a result. Rami Malek himself has spoken on the subject stating that he would have liked to include more of Mercury's 'beautiful relationship with Jim Hutton', and elaborated that the romance was, '… something I pushed for, to be quite honest, as much as possible and repeatedly brought to the attention of producers and directors and everyone who would listen.'

Despite this controversy the film has gone on to become the highest-grossing LGBT film ever, as well as the highest-grossing musical biopic of all time. This success was mirrored globally and, unusually for an LGBT project, the film was even released in China and Egypt. Although the film was subjected to censorship and edits before being shown in these countries, it is a remarkable feat and a testament to the passion for the music of Queen that is felt around the world.

Despite a decidedly lukewarm critical reception *Bohemian Rhapsody* went on to storm the awards ceremonies of 2019, taking home four Academy Awards for Best Actor, Best Film Editing, Best Sound Editing and Best Sound Mixing, and two Golden Globes for Best Actor – Motion Picture Drama and Best Motion Picture – Drama. With these wins *Bohemian Rhapsody* also took home the dubious title of being the lowest reviewed Golden Globes winner in thirty-three years – a title that seems to perfectly show the juxtaposition of feelings regarding the picture.

Speaking about the conflicting opinions surrounding the awards granted to *Bohemian Rhapsody*, Brian May released this statement through Twitter:

'Well, yes. You saw I went very quiet after the Oscars were over, signaling the end of the whole movie awards season. What really happened? We opened the Academy Awards show in a way it's NEVER been opened before, in an avalanche of excitement, looking out on an instant standing ovation from a glittering audience containing many of our heroes, all beaming and singing with us and punching the air. We then, shockingly, walked away with four Oscars – the top haul of the night. The head of local production came up to me and shook my hand as we left the auditorium. He said "I've been doing the Oscars for forty years, and that was the best opening we ever had!" A lovely moment. So – everyone assumes that we would then all go forth, deliriously partying with not a care in the world. But I guess I'm not that kind of animal. I was, and I am, deeply grateful for our Freddie film being recognised in a way we never had the audacity to expect. But I found the public activity behind the whole awards season, and the behaviour of the media writers surrounding it, deeply disturbing. If you look at the Press and Internet discussions that took place over the last few months, you can see that 90% of it is aimed at discrediting one or other, or all of the nominated films by innuendo and smears, rather than discussing their merits and admiring the skills that went into making them. Vitriol and dishonesty, and blatant attempts to shame and influence the members into voting the way they, in their arrogance required them to. It's not the fault of the awards panels – they stood up well. It's a kind of vindictive sickness that seems to have gripped public life. All through it, I've been biting my tongue, not wishing to influence the results of the ballots even by a hair. But, when the curtain came down, I was left with very mixed feelings.'

"Rami Malek's impersonation adds a kind of magic to this Queen-produced rock slog with a troubling moralistic subtext."

Steve Rose – The Guardian

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THE CLASH

From the early days to the punk explosion

To understand punk one must first understand the band who mixed art-school sensibilities with working-class ideologies and political protest, a sense of rock 'n' roll history with a futurist's outlook: that band was The Clash.

More than any other band, The Clash expanded the notion of what punk was musically by combining genres such as reggae, dub, ska, rockabilly, funk, nascent hip-hop, and much more besides – then taking it to the world. The Clash was the only band from the initial surge of energy that comprised the London punk scene in 1976-77 to go truly global and to stick around long enough to enjoy it. The Sex Pistols gained international notoriety, but disintegrated after merely one studio album, confirming for many of the old-guard critics that punk was, indeed, the disposable flash-in-a-pan movement that they had suspected it to be.

To understand the inner workings of The Clash one must first understand the pyschogeography of the city that spawned them – London – and the sociocultural climate of Britain at the time, both of which the band inextricably wove into their music and their aesthetic.

The future members of the band were all born in the post-war period, when rationing was only just ending and many aspects of Britain had changed little since Victorian times. Crucially, rock 'n' roll and the creation of the teenager as a visible demographic and subculture arrived on these shores during their adolescence. The members all came of age in the late sixties and early seventies, when London was placed firmly at the centre of the cultural universe.

During the period of 1970–1973, when the members of The Clash were turning eighteen, the likes of the Beatles and the Stones had heralded the way for a new generation of rock bands, a generation that had dissipated and diversified into many musical sub-genres united by a love of electricity: acid rock, psychedelia, progressive rock, folk-rock, heavy rock/metal, and glam/glitter rock.

Carnaby Street and the King's Road had already swung to a new beat, Vietnam had politicised the young, the hippy epoch had peaked with Woodstock and Altamont, and rock music was moving in different directions. Some

Joe Strummer performing at the Rainbow Theatre in 1977.

directions were darker and heavier, as epitomised by such bands as the Stones or Led Zeppelin, who strutted around like untouchable other-worldly gods. Others were more self-indulgent and ludicrous, such as the absurd fantasy world of progressive rock or glam-pop hybrids, as was evident in such stars of the day as Bowie and Bolan.

All well and good, but by the early seventies in London the great British cultural explosion had passed, and despite what the history books might suggest, the everyday reality of life and mainstream culture had been largely unaffected by it.

Life for the young men and women in the street was a far cry from the world of the stars presented in *NME* or on *Top of the Pops*, who operated from their lofty pedestals before retreating to their country mansions or tax-dodging foreign retreats. Most of the drugs they indulged in were unaffordable, and sex was not quite as freely available across the land as the hippies had people believe.

In short, the distance between music fan and rock star was as wide as it had ever been; it didn't involve the young fans but kept them at arm's length. This situation made, by the mid-seventies, for some of the most self-indulgent, overblown rock music ever, being created by the privileged few who had been allowed into the old-boy network establishment that was the British music industry.

"I was aware of the political system early on and... I grew up listening to a lot of reggae, music that had more edge than a lot of contemporary music insofar of political content..."

Paul Simonon

That is exactly where punk came in.

The argument as to when punk actually started rages on today, but we do know that two late-sixties Detroit bands, the Stooges and MC5, took rudimentary garage rock, amplified it, and turned it into something more forceful, inspirational, volatile and subversive than anything that had gone before. Live performances were legendary, and though neither band sold many records while they were in existence, they did set a new standard for how far rock music could – and should – be pushed.

In New York, The Velvet Underground stripped things down and painted them black, while in their wake the New York Dolls bastardised the bluesy imprint of the Stones with a hard-edged, if shambolic, street-smart sound and flamboyant, confrontational presentation.

All these bands influenced those few visionaries who decided to take this disparate music to another level, none more so than Queens quartet the Ramones, whose genius lay in their simplicity and who debuted in 1974. With three chords, energy in abundance, and an attitude that came from a very real outsider's position, they showed that a lack of money, good looks, and natural musical ability didn't have to get in the way of making exciting music played from the heart. The term 'punk' itself passed into everyday use via the fanzine of the same name that first documented this initial wave of such

The Clash in performance in 1979. (From left) Mick Jones, Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon.

Ramones-affiliated-and-inspired bands emerging from New York clubs such as CBGB's and Max's Kansas City in the early mid-seventies. Import copies of albums by these bands were only just filtering through to London, where the charts were largely ruled by inane pop-and-ballad bands or flares-wearing progressive rockers; however, this new sound would have a direct effect on the culture-junkie future members of The Clash.

Before that, though, it was in the ethnically diverse and largely working-class South London areas of Streatham and Brixton, respectively, that Mick Jones and Paul Simonon (both born 1955) found entry into music through the emerging reggae and ska music that their classmates turned them on to, or that they heard booming from sound systems. While Jones was also into such glam-leaning bands as the Dolls and Mott the Hoople, Simonon's love of ska and reggae led him to the mod and skinhead scenes, two defiantly working-class subcultures united by a love of black music and sharp clothes, two key factors that The Clash would incorporate from day one.

Both came from working-class origins and broken homes. Simonon's father was a member of the communist party, while Jones spent a large part of his teen years living with his grandmother, Stella, in a West London tower block that overlooked the Westway, that Ballardian concrete flyover road that ran through and over the heart of the city. The influence of such places as the rough-and-ready streets of Brixton, or the bird's eye view of the city from Mick's tower block, upon the music of The Clash is almost immeasurable.

> "...For Joe it was folk music – people like Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan. For all of us there was the knowledge that a song can be about things other than love, kissing, and having a nice dance."
>
> Paul Simonon

'When I was pretty young my dad decided we didn't have to go to Catholic church any more, and went on to join the Communist party,' Simonon told me in 2004. 'But what I couldn't get was how come I was the one out delivering the leaflets and he was the one at home watching the telly! So I was aware of the political system early on and also, obviously, because I grew up listening to a lot of reggae, music that had more edge than a lot of contemporary music insofar of political content. It seemed normal. For Joe [Strummer] it was folk music – people like Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan. For all of us there was the knowledge that a song can be about things other than love, kissing, and having a nice dance.'

While the surly and smart Simonon attended art school, the more flamboyant and cocksure Jones made his first forays into music with his short-lived band London SS, which featured future Damned and Generation X founder members Rat Scabies and Tony James, and existed from 1975-1976. Musicians who had auditioned included Jones' pal Simonon and drummer Terry Chimes.

One day, while signing on, Jones and Simonon famously spotted a face they

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FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

London Calling, **Tommy Gun**, **White Riot**, **English Civil War**, **I Fought the Law**, **Complete Control**, **Clash City Rockers**, **Train In Vain**, **The Magnificent Seven**, **Bank Robber**, **Rock the Casbah**, **Should I Stay or Should I Go** and many more.

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Joe Strummer on stage at the Lochem Festival, Holland, on 20 May 1982.

recognised from the London scene – John Mellor, better known by his more proletarian-sounding nickname Joe Strummer. Born the son of a diplomat in 1952, and privately educated, Strummer's background may have been different from the two stone-faced proto-punks staring at him, but his love of music and desire to do something, anything, was much the same. After a stint as a Dylan-and-Guthrie-inspired folk singer called Woody Mellor, Strummer was living in a squat and fronting the respected pub-rock band the 101ers, who the pair had seen and enjoyed, particularly its front man's energised performance and aggressive rhythm-guitar playing.

Overseen by their Svengali-like manager Bernie Rhodes, a charismatic man intent on instilling his own political and cultural agendas into a band (and also the man credited with introducing John Lydon to the Sex Pistols), Paul and Mick contacted Strummer to join the new outfit they were putting together. All involved had already been to see – and been blow away by the Sex Pistols, a group of North and West London contemporaries, and it was at a Pistols show that Strummer was first formally approached. After a day's thought, and swayed by their ambition, mischievousness and shared hatred of the lame rock bands of the day, Strummer was in, and the nameless band was formed in May 1976.

> "Bernie Rhodes was integral to the birth of The Clash. After rehearsals we'd sit down and ask each other what we wanted out of it... We cross-referenced with each other and asked..."
>
> **Paul Simonon**

Basing themselves at Rhodes' Rehearsal Rehearsals in Camden's Stables Market, the trio began writing songs and refining a sound, a look, an approach and an attitude.

The two songwriters, Joe Strummer and Mick Jones, each took guitar and vocal duties. Their differing styles complemented one another. Jones had a gentler and higher singing voice and a more fluid playing style, while Strummer compensated for a lack of melody with distinct and raw vocals and a stabbing, rhythmic approach that would be a huge influence on punk.

Paul Simonon, meanwhile, took up the easier-to-handle role of bass guitarist. Though he was only mastering the basics, with his chiseled film-star looks and natural sartorial style, he looked cooler than either of them, and was once described as 'the most handsome man in London'. Also joining this early line-up was guitarist Keith Levene, who was a valuable musical foil to Strummer's rudimentary rhythm guitar and Jones' emerging rock-star posturing.

Settling on the name The Clash (Simonon's choice, after noticing the word repeatedly appearing in a copy of the Evening Standard), they went in search of a drummer and settled for Terry Chimes, later credited as 'Tory Crimes'.

After some intense rehearsal the five-piece group travelled to Sheffield to play their first show at the Black Swan pub in July 1976. The following month, in August, they ousted Levene from the band, a – ahem – clash of personality with Jones has often been cited as the main reason.

Levene would soon resurface in 1978, alongside John Lydon (who had dropped the 'Rotten' epithet) in Public Image Limited, whose post-punk output would be as musically influential as that of the Pistols, and more commercially successful too. Ironically, it was a partnership solidified during The Clash's debut performance, Levene's memories of which offer a telling insight into the earliest days of a band, who at that point didn't always present a united front.

'The first time I spoke to John about doing something,' Levene recalled in 2003, 'was when The Clash supported the Pistols in Sheffield, but I actually knew

him beforehand through John Beverley, who I played in the Flowers of Romance with, and who as Sid Vicious went on to join John's band. So we were both sitting on our own, and I thought, fuck it, I'll go and talk to him because he looked so fucking pissed off. We both hated our respective bands. I knew I definitely wanted to leave The Clash and John and I had already spoken about getting together if we did. But I don't think he believed I would actually leave them. At that point the Pistols had a naiveté about them, which was something purposely put together by Malcolm and Bernard Rhodes, the idea of putting flash guitars in the hands of burglars. The raw energy of it all inspired me.'

Chimes' days with this first line-up of The Clash were also numbered.

As Levene noted, much of this manoeuvring was down to manager Bernie Rhodes. Like the Pistols' manager, Malcolm McLaren, Rhodes was an ideas-man, an agitator inspired by anarchism, situationism, and the student-led Paris uprising of the sixties. Opinionated and galvanising, Rhodes was a radical, intent on applying his ideas to the rock 'n' roll format, and it worked. During an early TV interview, Strummer directed the camera to Rhodes sleeping nearby and declared, 'He invented punk'.

'You have to understand that Bernie Rhodes was integral to the birth of The Clash,' Simonon agreed, speaking over a quarter of a century later. 'After rehearsals we'd sit down and ask each other what we wanted out of it, and there's that famous line about Terry Chimes replying, "I want a Lamborghini", which was fine for him. But, yeah, we cross-referenced with each other and asked, "Where are we going? What makes this band different?" rather than, "Let's all get drunk, pull birds, and play guitars", and that's it. We wanted more depth, a more human approach…'

As 1977 rolled in, The Clash found themselves perfectly placed and began to speak of a 'year zero' approach to music that wiped the slate clean and only looked to the future. The Sex Pistols had already galvanised a new movement that drew together art students, small groups of alienated middle-class kids from the suburbs, and working-class kids from the different neighbourhoods of London. The Clash played with the Pistols as well as such other new bands as The Damned and the ace all-girl trio the Slits.

Mick Jones (left) and Paul Simonon performing live at the Lochem Festival.

All the bands were united by a basic grasp of their instruments and a disdain for all that had gone before. 'No Elvis, Beatles, or Rolling Stones / In 1977'

> "'Where are we going? What makes this band different?' rather than, 'Let's all get drunk, pull birds, and play guitars', and that's it. We wanted more depth, a more human approach..."
>
> **Paul Simonon**

Strummer famously spat in the timely-written *1977*. As they played more shows, the likes of *NME*, *Melody Maker*, and *Record Mirror* filled more column inches with talk of this new movement. Punk passed into the parlance of young music fans and the record companies began to pay interest.

Along with the Pistols, The Clash was certainly the most tantalising prospect. Though there was a certain raw shoddiness to their early sound, a constant dedication to their art – including, at various times, living in the sub-zero rehearsal space – honed them into a tight band. The songs also had a strong socio-political conscience, born out of the left-wing counter-culture, while their paint-splattered, Pollock-inspired clothes (created by Simonon) offered a look that was hard-edged, new, and a much-needed antidote to their looser-looking contemporaries, most of whom were still dressing like it was the sixties. To hammer the point home, they also daubed slogans onto their instruments and street-and-stage clothes (for they one

The Clash bassist Paul Simonon.

were and the same), such as 'Creative Violence' and their retort to the sixties mantra of 'Love & Peace': 'Hate & War'. Strummer further outlined the band's ethos in an early piece, stating, 'I think people ought to know that we're anti-fascist, we're anti-violence, we're anti-racist, and we're pro-creative. We're against ignorance.'

The first wave of UK punk coalesced with the infamous *Anarchy* tour of December 1976, in which The Clash, Sex Pistols, The Damned, and ex-New York Doll guitarist Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers, a piratical but likeable band often acknowledged as being the first to bring heroin into the British punk scene. The four bands shared, first a tour bus and many drunken shenanigans, and then collective disbelief, as shows were cancelled following the Pistols infamous expletive-addled debut TV appearance on *The Bill Grundy Show*. Overnight punk went national and was the subject of much criticism from the reactionary UK tabloid newspapers. A wave of negativity washed over the tour and only seven of the original twenty-one shows went ahead, with short-lived drummer Rob Harper temporarily replacing Terry Chimes.

1977 was the year The Clash – and punk – broke. On 27 January, mere months into their career, but with punk now an exciting emerging subculture, The Clash signed with CBS for an advance of £100,000. Suddenly, the drummer-less band, who were used to sleeping in draughty squats and existing on lager and speed, had some money to spend. They recorded their debut album quickly, with Chimes back on drums. It was preceded by their debut single, *White Riot*, a gritty, high-speed burst of noise concerning race riots between young black youths and the Metropolitan police that Strummer and Simonon had witnessed at the previous summer's incendiary Notting Hill Carnival.

In April, their debut album, *The Clash*, was released to critical acclaim. An exercise in economy and energy, it distilled the band's essence into a brace of exciting, snarling rock 'n' roll songs. *The Clash* explored alienation, boredom, frustration, drugs, unemployment and identity crisis. It oozed anxiety and negativity, though only in the realist sense; they were, for much of their career, naively optimistic. The song titles alone heavily contributed to the new lexicon and look of punk, with *I'm So Bored with the USA*, *What's My Name*, *Deny*, *Cheat*, and *London's Burning*. A gutsy rendition of Junior Murvin's recent reggae hit *Police & Thieves* added onto the end lent potency through the band's delivery and the song's social relevance – a hint of things to come. The cover image captured Joe, Paul, and Mick, blank-eyed, lean and mean in their customised clothing and sporting uniformly cropped hair, a rare look for Mick Jones, who as a guitarist from the Richards-Thunders school of style preferred to keep his longer. This perfectly packaged musical Molotov cocktail entered the UK album charts at a creditable No. 12, and with this success The Clash had announced themselves as a serious concern.

Meanwhile, after auditioning over two hundred drummers, the trio found a new secret weapon: twenty-one-year-old Nicky 'Topper' Headon, a talented and already experienced rock drummer who was also skilled in jazz, funk, and soul. A band is only as good as its drummer, and Topper provided both the solid backbone and the diversity to push the quartet forward. He proved to be a major contributing factor to their expansive output in the early eighties.

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FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

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The Clash

Released on 8 April 1977, *The Clash* is remembered as one of the greatest albums of all time. In true punk fashion, the album was recorded on a meagre budget of £4,000, a figure that is reflected in the stripped back artwork for the album's cover. The sleeve shows a black and white shot of The Clash outside the 'Rehearsal Rehearsals' building where they practiced, located in what is now Camden Market. Shot by Kate Simon, the image didn't actually include the original Clash drummer Terry Chimes, as despite performing the drumming on the album, he had already decided to leave the band.

Give 'Em Enough Rope

Released on 10 November 1978, *Give 'Em Enough Rope* was the first Clash album released in the US. The sleeve features a vivid image of a cowboy being eaten apart by crows as a horseman in black watches on. The grim photo, taken by Adrian Atwater, gained inspiration from a postcard titled 'End of the Trail', but it was Gene Greif who combined it with a painting called 'End of the Trail for Capitalism' by Hugh Brown. Jones and Strummer had become enamoured with the artwork after seeing it displayed in San Francisco. and were keen to incorporate it in their album sleeve.

The classic Clash line-up was in place and the band set out on tour as punk rock snowballed around them. A series of key events took place throughout 1977, that would place punk and The Clash in the history books. These were the Silver Jubilee (soundtracked by the Sex Pistols' *God Save the Queen*), the headline *White Riot* tour (with Buzzcocks, Subway Sect and the Slits in support), and a riotous sold-out show at the prestigious Rainbow Theatre, working with legendry dub producer Lee 'Scratch' Perry.

Gigs played during this period were some of the most exciting that provincial Britain had ever witnessed, and the direct influence of The Clash would be evident in the many second-wave bands that were soon forming right across the UK as a direct result of seeing them live ; bands such as the Undertones, Skids, the Ruts, and countless others. For better or worse, each took their own influence from The Clash. For example, London's Sham 69 took the rough-edged 'man in the street' approach to new extremes, while the Two Tone Records scene led by the Specials, who toured with The Clash, would largely capitalise on the reggae-ska-punk hybrid that Strummer and Co had pioneered.

The notoriety of The Clash and their credibility with the press and young fans alike grew, helped along by mischievous tales of textbook rock 'n' roll tomfoolery, such as the time Paul and Topper were arrested as suspected IRA terrorists by the Flying Squad when they were shooting at pigeons from the band's rehearsal space rooftop. The police thought they were firing at passing trains and they were eventually ordered to pay £700 damages to the pigeons' owner. They were also banned from a hotel chain for the theft of a pillowcase, and survived minor drug busts, increasingly riotous shows, and their fair share of hedonism.

With both band and label keen to capitalise on the band's newfound notoriety, Strummer and Jones flew to Kingston, Jamaica for a week of songwriting. Ripped off by dealers at the docks and somewhat in fear for their safety, it wasn't quite the dream come true they had imagined. The duo spent much of the week in their hotel room, writing such new songs as *Safe European Home*, about their feelings of displacement as Europeans in a foreign land, and the machine-gun rhythms of the powerful, soon-to-be live-favourite *Tommy Gun*.

The fruit of this frantic burst of songwriting was The Clash's second album, *Give 'Em Enough Rope*, recorded with Blue Oyster Cult's Sandy Pearlman, an American brought in to polish their rough sound into something more accessible. It worked. The album was a collection of songs that mixed myth-making tales of robbery, stabbings and drug raids with more emotive moments, like the tender *Stay Free*. It was a strong rock album that has stood the test of time, yet it was neither the raw, amphetamine-dabbing punk of the previous year nor the pan-international flavoured releases of the next decade.

It was the first – and maybe only – true concession the band made towards their record company, who were intent on breaking them in the US and beyond. Indeed, *Give 'Em Enough Rope* was the band's first release stateside, a reworked version of *The Clash* only being released in America after their second proper album had introduced them to a nation whose knowledge of punk was limited to an image of the kamikaze nihilism represented by their London pal Sid Vicious.

Give 'Em Enough Rope was also the first suggestion that The Clash were not part of a short-lived scene, and that they might just be in for the long haul. By the time of the album's release in November 1978, punk had changed irrevocably. The aforementioned second-wave bands had turned it into a fixed, easily identifiable subculture. It was no longer in the hands of a select few dozen, artistically minded pioneers making vastly different music in London and Manchester, and instead was rapidly passing into parody. Just compare Siouxsie and the Banshees with Buzzcocks or Subway Sect to see how diverse early punk could be.

"I think people ought to know that we're anti-fascist, we're anti-violence, we're anti-racist, and we're pro-creative. We're against ignorance."

Joe Strummer

The classic Clash line-up (1977-1982) in 1982.
Left to right: Nicky 'Topper' Headon, Paul Simonon, Mick Jones, Joe Strummer.

Blame for this devolution can partly be laid with The Clash's rivals and counterparts the Sex Pistols, who burned bright and burned out. The level of pressure on the band had merely increased throughout 1977, and was unsustainable; particularly given the inexperience of the band's members. Stir drugs, violence, money wrangles, paranoia, a politicised manager (Malcolm McLaren), and worldwide fame into the mix and the Pistols were destined to implode. It happened during their first US tour, a jaunt that, possibly ill advisedly, took in the less-tolerant cowboy towns of the South, where these four malnourished London kids faced down audiences comprised of burly cowboys who saw them as a threat. They also reached plenty of young American fans bowled over by punk, even if their interpretation was markedly different to that of, say, singer Johnny Rotten, widely acknowledged as the brains of the band.

Sid Vicious, who had gone from goofy young Pistols friend/fan to premier punk player within eighteen months, compounded problems. It was an ascension fuelled by heroin, speed and Vicious' falling for his own myth-making hook, line and sinker.

The Sex Pistols had split in January 1978, amid acrimony and exhaustion after a chaotic show in San Francisco, and Vicious continued on a downward spiral aided by heroin and errant girlfriend Nancy Spungen. It was a fall that was even more rapid than his ascension, and one that culminated in Spungen dying from a stab wound in a New York hotel room. Accounts of what actually happened that fateful night are still the cause of much debate, but the outcome was Vicious being arrested by the NYPD for his girlfriend's murder and sent to the notoriously tough Rykers Island prison. No one would ever find out the truth, for Sid overdosed on heroin while out on bail in January 1979. Punk had destroyed one of its premier exponents, and in some ways the unwitting Vicious had killed off punk. What once was fun, mischievous, creative and culturally relevant was now something altogether darker.

The demise of the Pistols is important to understanding the longevity of The Clash. The sad death of the band – figuratively and, tragically, literally – who had kicked down the doors provided a valuable lesson. It's also worth noting, that whereas the Sex Pistols had been motivated by money and maximum provocation – as much a McLaren social experiment as anything – The Clash were always more concerned with music and politics, and operated with a higher IQ than their counterparts.

This article is an extract from **London's Calling**, the Clash Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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This issue we asked…

What is the greatest album of all time?

The results are in; they have been checked, double-checked, triple-checked and verified, and the winner is… *drum roll please…*

Pink Floyd's

The Dark Side of the Moon

Released on 1 March 1973, *The Dark Side of the Moon* propelled Pink Floyd in to superstardom. Despite enjoying success before as a band, it was this magnum opus that really brought Pink Floyd to the masses and cemented their status as rock icons.

Dark Side of the Moon was originally developed at the Decca rehearsal studio in Broadhurst Gardens, West Hampstead during 1971 and 1972. The basic idea was to make a record about the different pressures of modern life, however the album concept would eventually be expanded to cover all facets of life, including death, time and particularly mental illness; an issue that strongly affected the band through the struggles of their founder member Syd Barrett. Despite leaving the band in 1968 due to deteriorations in his mental health, Syd remained at the forefront of the band's collective mind, serving as both an inspiration and a cautionary tale, and both *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* (1975) and *The Wall* (1979) were written in homage to the troubled visionary.

Before settling on *The Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd considered numerous album titles. *The Dark Side of the Moon* was selected very early on in the album's development, however they soon discovered that another band named Medicine Head had used this title, so decided on *Eclipse* as a working title. Unfortunately for Medicine Head, their album was a commercial flop and Pink Floyd reclaimed the album title, debuting what was then named *Dark Side of the Moon: A Piece for Assorted Lunatics*, at the Rainbow Theatre in London on 17 February 1972. The show was received with great fanfare by critics, with Michael Wale of *The Times* going so far as to credit the music with 'bringing tears to the eyes. It was so completely understanding and musically questioning.'

Although the assembled press response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, Pink Floyd's touring and recording obligations prevented further work on the album for a number of months. The band were contracted to record the music for French art-house film La Vallée (*Obscured by Clouds*) and flew to France to do so in February 1972. Following the conclusion of these recording sessions in March there were various scheduled tour dates around the globe that kept Pink Floyd busy for the majority of 1972, and with the exception of one month, May–June, it was not until 9 January 1973, that Pink Floyd were able to find the time in their schedule to complete the album.

Rogers Waters in 1971.

Despite the difficulties in finding time to record, Pink Floyd have always looked fondly on these years, and regarded the development of *Dark Side of the Moon* as the time at which they worked most harmoniously as a band. This unity is perhaps part of what makes the album so successful as a piece, with all band members working together towards a singular goal. Roger Waters has since reflected on the period stating, 'I was definitely less dominant than I later became. We were pulling together pretty cohesively. Dave sang *Breathe* much better than I could have. His voice suited the song. I don't remember any ego problems about who sang what at that point. There was a balance.'

This group cohesion is evident on the record, with many critics remarking that the album captured just the right blend of lyricism, inspired instrumental passages, innovative use of sound effects and genuine musical innovation. All performed to a uniformly high standard of composition and performance.

Speaking on the genesis of *Dark Side of the Moon* Roger Waters recalled, 'I think we had already started improvising around some pieces at Broadhurst Gardens. After I had written a couple of the lyrics for the songs, I suddenly thought, I know what would be good: to make a whole record about the different pressures that apply in modern life.' David Gilmour has also reflected on the album's conception in West Hampstead remarking, 'It began in a little rehearsal room in London. We had quite a few pieces of music, some of which were left

Whilst the musical content of *The Dark Side of the Moon* has cemented the album as one of greatest of all time, the artwork is equally iconic.

The cover design was the work of London based design group Hipgnosis – founded by Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell. From their conception Hipgnosis were closely aligned with Pink Floyd – the studio's first commission was the band's second album *A Saucerful of Secrets*. Hipgnosis would go on to create many more iconic covers for the band including *Atom Heart Mother* and *Obscured by Clouds*.

Hipgnosis' abstract designs proved unpopular with Pink Floyd's label EMI, who were concerned with the lack of wording on the covers, fearing fans would not be able to identify the releases. The band members, however, were delighted with Hipgnosis' output and enlisted them to create the artwork for *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Rick Wright tasked Hipgnosis with developing a concept that was 'smarter, neater – more classy' than previous releases.

The artwork itself was created by designer George Hardie. Hardie came across the prism motif in a book, and presented the design as one of seven potential ideas to Pink Floyd. The band's decision was unanimous, and the iconic cover was born. Interestingly the light band emanating from the prism seen on the iconic cover only has six colours, rather than the traditional seven. Indigo has been omitted from traditional division of the spectrum.

Storm Thorgerson has since stated that the inspiration behind the prism idea was the ambitious light shows that Pink Floyd were creating at the time: 'They hadn't really celebrated their light show. That was one thing. The other thing was the triangle. I think the triangle, which is a symbol of thought and ambition, was very much a subject of Roger's lyrics.'

over from previous things. We were there for a little while, writing pieces of music and jamming. It was a very dark room.' With Nick Mason adding, 'We started with the idea of what the album was going to be about: the stresses and strains on our lives'.

Nick Mason was actually one of the only members of Pink Floyd to have expressed dissatisfaction with the development process of *Dark Side of the Moon*, as when he was interviewed for *Sounds* magazine in 1972, he stated, 'I think the thing that bothers me more than anything is that we seem to get stuck into a slow four tempo for nearly everything we do. Like the speed of *Meddle* is the speed of nearly everything we've done for too long. That has something to do with it, that penchant for slow tempos. But again, I think, in some ways things are becoming more aggressive. There's more aggression in the way we do *Careful with That Axe, Eugene* on stage now than there ever was when we first recorded it. Our original recordings of that were extremely mild, jog along stuff. Even if it doesn't always come off, there's meant to be a lot of very heavy vibes coming off the stage during *Dark Side of the Moon*. We're well into putting on a lot of effect in order to make the whole thing heavy, really, in the true sense of the word. I'm not expressing that very well, but I don't think it's getting any lighter, and I don't think the intention is to make it light, either. It's all a bit abstract, really.'

> "That's not to say that the potential for the sun to shine doesn't exist. Walk down the path towards the light rather than into the darkness."
>
> **Roger Waters**

Despite this apparent trepidation from Mason, *Dark Side of the Moon* was moulded and refined over the course of 1972, and Pink Floyd have since suggested that the band's packed touring schedule was the catalyst for the success of *Dark Side of the Moon* as it gave them a, hitherto unparalleled, sounding ground for the album. Whilst touring in 1972, Pink Floyd performed their new material in the order it would later appear on the *Dark Side of the Moon*. This gave the band the chance to make improvements to the performance and composition of their pieces each night, and to gauge the audience's reaction. Whilst discussing this process Nick Mason remarked, 'It was a hell of a good way to develop a record. You really get familiar with it; you learn the pieces you like and what you don't like. And it's quite interesting for the audience to hear a piece developed. If people saw it four times it would have been very different each time.'

Although the band have spoken of the unit's solidity whilst developing *Dark Side of the Moon*, the album was actually the first Pink Floyd record to feature Roger Waters as the sole lyricist. At the time Waters felt that he wanted Pink

Richard Wright in 1971.

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Floyd's music to contain more direct lyrics that would resonate immediately with the fans, in contrast with the some of the abstract work they had released to date. Surprisingly, given the later power struggles and acrimony within the band, this new writing approach was actually welcomed by the group at the time, with Gilmour even stating, 'I never rated myself terribly highly in the lyrics department, and Roger wanted to do it. I think it was a sense of relief that he was willing to do that.'

In fact, Pink Floyd were so pleased with the results of Water's writing that they decided to print the lyrics on the now iconic sleeve for *Dark Side of the Moon*, the first time the band had chosen to do so.

Whilst Roger Waters was the only credited lyricist on *Dark Side of the Moon*, the album featured vocal appearances from a multitude of individuals outside of the band. Pink Floyd roadies, Abbey Road staff and other artists who were recording at the studios during that period, were confronted with a series of questions; from the banal to the philosophical, with the intention of including their responses on the album in an attempt to tie the songs on the record together. Certain snippets successfully made it to the final mix of *Dark Side of the Moon*, however the answers of the most famous interviewee, Paul McCartney, were deemed unusable, with Roger Waters commenting, 'He was the only person who found it necessary to perform, which was useless, of course. I thought it was really interesting that he would do that. He was trying to be funny, which wasn't what we wanted at all.'

Despite producing some truly iconic quotes, it was the vocals of songwriter and session singer, Clare Torry on *The Great Gig in the Sky* that would prove to be the most memorable cameo on *Dark Side of the Moon*. Torry's collaboration with Pink Floyd initially gave no indication that her performance would go on to become one of the most unforgettable vocals in rock history, and Torry had this to say of her inauspicious recording session with the band, 'I just had a call from this guy that worked at Abbey Road called Dennis who rang me up and asked if I was free to do a session, so I went up to Abbey Road and I had no idea what it was, nobody told me, I didn't know if it was going to be a choir, two other girls or three other girls. So, I walked in to the control room and the band were there, they explained to me that they were doing this album and that it was nearly finished, the concept of the album, birth and death and everything in between, and they played me the backing track, and I asked what they wanted and basically they had no idea.

DARK SIDE FACT

Just like Earth, both the near side (light side) and the far side (dark side) of the moon have both a day and a night. We are simply unable to see the far side; as the time it takes the moon to complete a revolution on its axis is the same amount of time as it takes to circle Earth – around twenty-seven days.

When I look back, I was very new to this sort of world and probably quite naïve, but anyway I listened to the track a couple of times and personally had no idea what to do or what they wanted so I said I think the best thing for me is to go in to the studio, put the cans on and have a little go to see what happens. So I started off by going, "Oh baby baby, yeah, yeah baby baby", which is what one tended to do for scat singing, and they said "Oh no, no, we don't want any words", and that really stumped me. So David Gilmour came in, and I have to say he was really the one that directed me, there wasn't a word from anybody else as far as I remember. So David said "Would you like me to write out the

Pink Floyd left to right: Richard Wright, Dave Gilmour, Roger Waters, Nick Mason.

chord sequence?" and I said "No, no", and it sort of just happened, because I was thinking that I didn't know what they wanted, and I really didn't know, but OK, best feet forward.

I have said this many times, but it's completely true, I thought to myself I have to pretend to be an instrument and that gave me an avenue to explore. So I started doing something and they said "We like that." So, I said to Alan "OK, put the red light on and record this because usually the first take is the best", and I started singing and did it. Then they said "Well I think we'll do another take." So I did another one, then David said, "I think you could improve upon that", and I didn't think I could, and I started the third track and then in the middle I stopped and said "Look I really think that you've got enough." Then I went in to the control room and not much was said, and I said, "Well alright then, goodbye." And I was convinced it would never see the light of day because they hadn't commented or said "great" or "awful", nothing.

FLOYD FACT

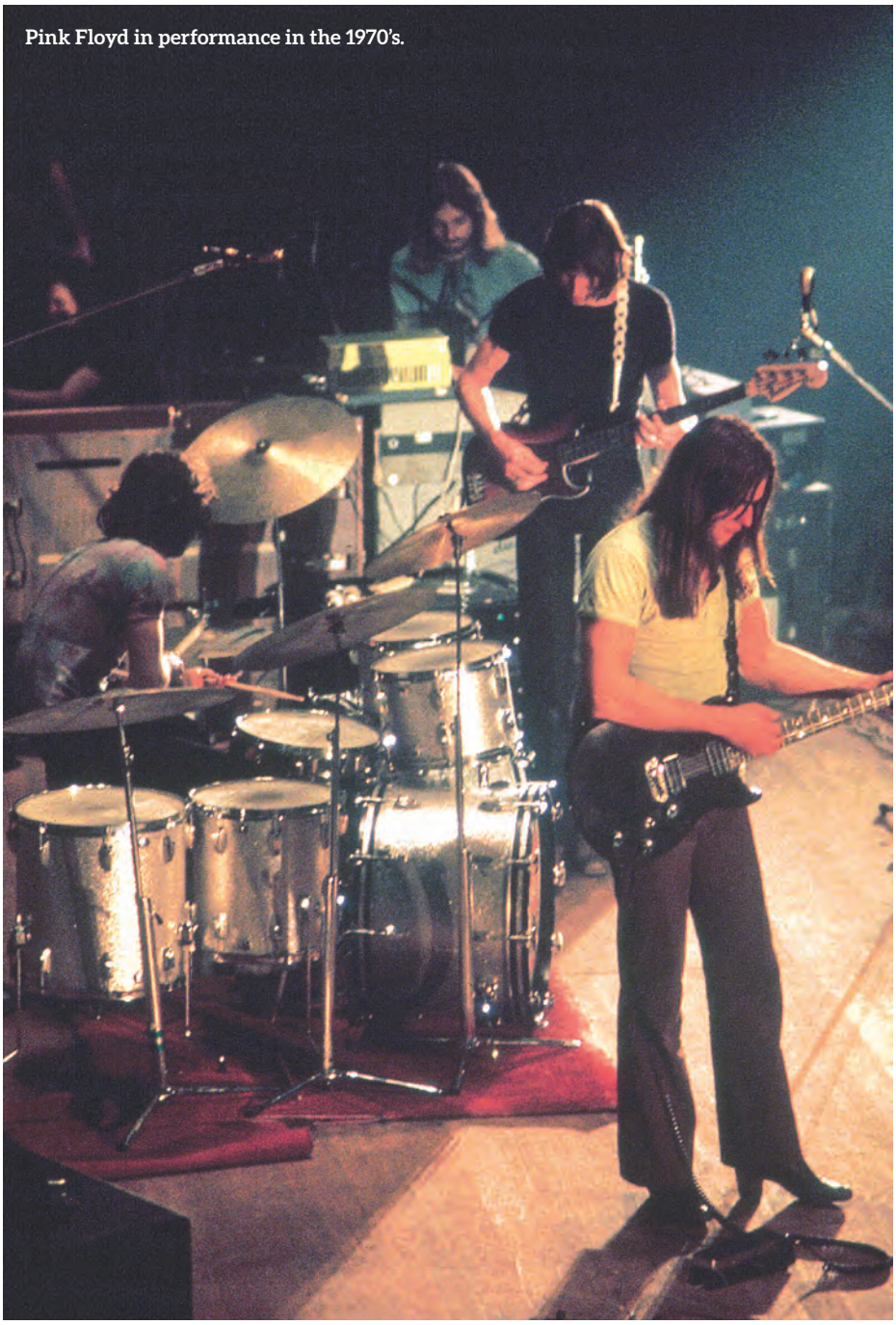
As huge Monty Python fans, Pink Floyd were one of a number of rock groups who helped contribute to the initial budget for Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Pink Floyd put up £20,000 of their profits from Dark Side of the Moon to help fund the classic British comedy directed by Terry Gilliam.

I honestly thought that they didn't like it, then I suppose in about March, I had no idea when the album was coming out, and I was on my way home to my flat and there used to be a record shop on Kings Road just past the Chelsea Potter, and there in the window was this now familiar cover and so I walked in and opened the album and there it was *The Great Gig in the Sky*, vocal Clare Torry and so I thought, oh I'll have to buy that. Several months later I was doing something at Abbey Road and Alan was there and he said that the album was doing really well so I said what album? And he said *Dark Side of the Moon*, and so I said oh fine, jolly good and that was it really.'

Whilst the critical response to *Dark Side of the Moon* was overwhelmingly positive, the press reception for the release of the album was a chaotic affair. Critics were invited to an event, held at the London Planetarium on 27 February 1973, that the majority of the band themselves refused to attend. Pink Floyd members cited sound issues as the reason for their absence, namely that the quadrophonic mix of the album was not yet ready, and life sized cardboard cut outs of the missing members greeted the press instead. The sole attending Pink Floyd member, Richard Wright, then presented the gathered press with a stereo mix of *Dark Side of the Moon* through a tinny PA system. Fortunately this bizarre release did nothing to stem the enthusiasm of attending reporters, and *Dark Side of the Moon* themed shows and events have remained a staple of planetariums around the world ever since.

Some highlights from the reviews of 1973 include Loyd Grossman of *Rolling Stone* magazine declaring the release, 'a fine album with a textural and conceptual richness that not only invites, but demands involvement', and Steve Peacock of *Sounds* extolling, 'I don't care if you've never heard a note of the Pink Floyd's music in your life, I'd unreservedly recommend everyone to *The Dark Side of the Moon*'.

Despite the runaway success of *Dark Side of the Moon*, the album only actually held the No. 1 spot in America's Billboard album chart for a week, a feat it didn't manage to equal in the UK, where it remains the highest selling album to never reach No. 1 – it was beaten to the top spot by Elton John's *Don't Shoot Me I'm Only the Piano Player*. In spite of these disappointments, *Dark Side of the Moon* remains the



Pink Floyd in performance in the 1970's.

seventh-best-selling album of all time in the UK, and retained its presence in the US album chart for a staggering 741 weeks between the album's release in 1973 and 1988. Worldwide sales of the album are have reached twenty-four million certified sales, yet some industry estimates place this figure at closer forty-five million copies, and *Dark Side of the Moon* is currently the fourth biggest selling album globally. The success of the album has certainly not overwhelmed certain band members though, as Nick Mason commented in 2007 that he felt not all the success of *Dark Side of the Moon* could be attributed to the music: 'I think that when it was finished, everyone thought it was the best thing we'd ever done to date, and everyone was very pleased with it, but there's no way that anyone felt it was five times as good as *Meddle*, or eight times as good as *Atom Heart Mother*, or the sort of figures that it has in fact sold. It was… not only about being a good album but also about being in the right place at the right time.'

The success of *Dark Side of the Moon* is undeniable, yet reviews revisiting album contain retrospective niggles that were not present in initial appraisals; such as this piece by the respected American rock journalist Robert Christgau, best known for his pioneering work with *Village Voice* Magazine, who wrote about *Dark Side of the Moon* through post-punk eyes when it was chosen as one of the *Rock Albums of the 70s*. The following controversial review was published in 1981:

'With its technological mastery and its conventional wisdom once removed, this is a kitsch masterpiece – taken too seriously by definition, but not without charm. It may sell on sheer aural sensationalism, but the studio effects do transmute David Gilmour's guitar solos into something more than they were when he played them. Its taped speech fragments may be old hat, but for once they cohere musically. And if its pessimism is received, that doesn't make the ideas untrue – there are even times, especially when Dick Parry's saxophone undercuts the electronic pomp, when this record brings its clichés to life, which is what pop is supposed to do, even the kind with delusions of grandeur.'

Mr Christgau was definitely an atypical reviewer, as most agreed that the cumulative effect of the brilliance of the compositions and the pristine quality of the recording served to position *Dark Side of the Moon* as a landmark in popular music. The problem for Pink Floyd was that at some stage they would have to produce an album to follow their own masterpiece. The standard had been set so highly by *Dark Side of the Moon* that in every respect it was clear the follow up had to be nothing short of a second masterpiece.

During the course of an interview published on 19 May 1973 in *Melody Maker*, David Gilmour declared that he was not unduly concerned by the pressures brought about by the phenomenal sales of *Dark Side of the Moon*.

'No, success doesn't make much difference to us. It doesn't make any difference to our output or general attitudes. There are four attitudes in the band that are quite different. But we all want to push forward and there are all sorts of things we'd like to do. For Roger Waters it is more important to do things that say something. Richard Wright is more into putting out good music. And I'm in the middle with Nick. I want to do it all, but sometimes I think Roger can feel the musical content is less important and can slide around it. Roger and Nick tend to make the tapes of effects like the heartbeat on the LP. At concerts we have quad tapes and four-track tape machines so we can mix the sound and pan it around. The heartbeat alludes to the human condition and sets the mood for the music, which describes the emotions experienced during a lifetime. Amidst the chaos, there is beauty and hope for mankind. The effects are purely to help the listener understand what the whole thing is about. It's amazing, at the final mixing stage we thought it was obvious

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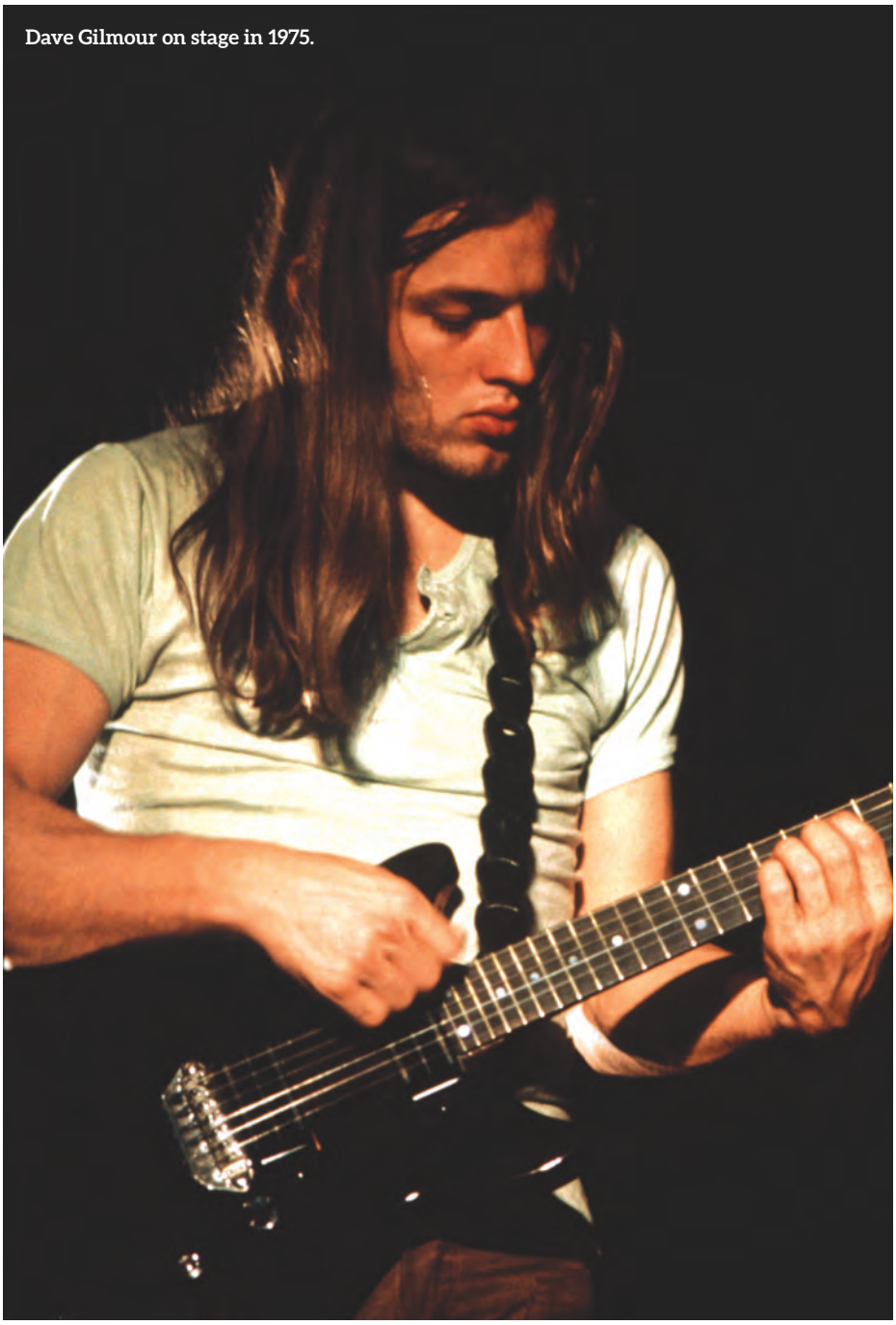
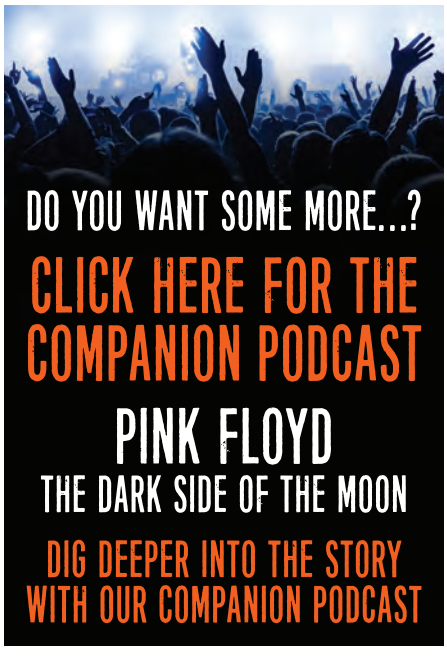


Dave Gilmour on stage in 1975.

what the album was about, but still, a lot of people, including the engineers and the roadies, when we asked them, didn't know what the LP was about. They just couldn't say, and I was really surprised. They didn't see it was about the pressures that can drive a young chap mad. I really don't know if our things get through. But you have to carry on hoping. Our music is about neuroses, but that doesn't mean that we are neurotic. We are able to see it, and discuss it. *The Dark Side of the Moon* itself is an allusion to the moon and lunacy. The dark side is generally related to what goes on inside people's heads, the subconscious and the unknown.'

Despite Gilmour's confidence there was still no sign of a new album. A year later on 16 November 1974, *Melody Maker* published an interview with Rick Wright that was quick to touch on the increasingly large gap between *Dark Side of the Moon* and the next Pink Floyd album: 'It'll be a two-year gap between *Dark Side* and the next one, and that's too long in my opinion. We have never been a prolific group in terms of records. We average about one a year over our whole career. It's not a policy to work like that; it's just the way it happens. We have a deal with the record company that makes us do about seven albums in five years, which is one album a year and maybe a couple of film scores. It's very easy to make that deal. *Dark Side of the Moon* has been in the English charts ever since it was released, which is quite amazing. We all felt it would do at least as well as the other albums, but not quite as well as it did. All our albums have done well in this country, but *Dark Side* was number one in the U. S. and we never dreamed it would do that. It was probably the easiest album to sell in that it was the easiest to listen to, but it's success has obviously put some kind of pressure on us, and that is, what to do next. We have always tried to bring out something different with our next release and it would be very easy now to carry on with the same formula as *Dark Side*, which a lot of people would do. It's changed me in many ways because it's brought in a lot of money and one feels very secure when you can sell an album for two years. But it hasn't changed my attitude to music. Even though it was so successful, it was made in the same way as all our other albums and the only criteria we have about releasing music is whether we like it or not. It was not a deliberate attempt to make a commercial album. It just happened that way. Lots of people probably thought we all sat down and discussed it like that, but it wasn't the case at all. We knew it had a lot more melody than previous Floyd albums, and there was a concept that ran all through it. The music was easier to absorb and having girls singing away added a commercial touch that none of our other records had.'

This 'commercial touch' has been striking a chord with audiences ever since, and *The Dark Side of the Moon* continues to be a perennial hit. Frequently included on rankings of the greatest albums of all time, the album has proved to be as timeless as it was ground-breaking, and there is no doubt that it's legacy will endure, creating generations of Pink Floyd fans in decades to come.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A track-by-track journey through Pink Floyd's ambitious 1973 masterpiece

Speak to Me

The overture, a sound collage, saw Waters generously give Mason a song writing credit that he later came to bitterly regret. The various spoken pieces about madness come from roadies Pete Watts and Chris Adamson, and from Gerry O'Driscoll, the doorman at Abbey Road studios where the album was made. Waters had devised a series of cards containing twenty questions that ranged from, 'What does the phrase dark side of the Moon mean?' to, 'Are you afraid of dying?' Everyone the band could get their hands on in Abbey Road including Paul and Linda McCartney, who happened to be making an album there, were asked to respond and then taped. The McCartney answers were discarded, as his responses were regarded to be too measured.

Breathe

Adapted from a piece Waters had written for *The Body* documentary in 1970. Roger claimed that the lyrics 'are an exhortation directed mainly at myself, but also at anybody else who cares to listen. It's about trying to be true to one's path.' Gilmour provided the vocals, both lead and harmony, and the guitar part, which he played on an open-tuned Stratocaster across his knees.

On the Run

This number came from Waters and Gilmour experimenting with a VCS 3 synthesiser – creating an eight-note sequence similar to the one Pete Townshend had been doing on *Baba O'Reilly*. The point of the track was to express the stress and pressures of everyday life – and so a whole menagerie of sound effects were added such as airport sounds over the footsteps of a passenger desperately rushing for the plane, and a train sound that was actually played by a guitar. It was another roadie, Roger the Hat, who is heard speaking the line, 'live for today, gone tomorrow' – a response to one of Waters' card questions.

Time

A stunning group composition. Waters would later admit that during the making of the record – he was twenty-nine at the time – he suddenly felt as if he'd grown up; that childhood and adolescence were just training for adult life. Ultimately it's about making the most out of life, not wasting it. Again the song is characterised by a dominating sound effect – clocks ticking – the basic sound created by Waters' Fender Precision Bass and Mason's Rototoms. However, it was engineer Alan Parsons that added all the real timepieces after Waters told him the song's title. The other dominating characteristic about this number was the backing singing to Gilmour's lead vocal provided by Barry St John, Doris Troy, Liza Strike and Lesley Duncan.

The Great Gig In the Sky

This stunning composition keeps up the progression of power. For many years this song was credited solely to Rick Wright until an out of court settlement in 2005 finally resolved that the piece should be jointly credited to Clare Torry. Based on a sequence of piano chords written by Wright, this song addresses the omnipresent fear of death and mortality in life. Originally intended as an instrumental sequence, and featuring some blinding guitar from Gilmour, the vocals were only added a couple of weeks before the LP was finished. Clare Torry – a young EMI staff songwriter who had only recently begun to do a few sessions as a singer, provided the improvised vocal and her strikingly gutsy vocals take the song to an unforgettable climax. Wright later adapted the song for a Neurofen advert – and they say rock 'n' roll is dead!

Money

A Roger Waters composition in the unusual 7/8 time signature. The track has self-explanatory lyrics about the evils of greed and rock-star wealth. Waters certainly saw some of the songs on this LP as being about the lately departed Barrett. The rhythmically-sequenced loop of the cash-till sound effect gives the song a lot of its bite, and a touch of irony, as record store cash registers around the world would soon be ringing up millions of sales to its tune. Also featured is Dick Parry, an old Cambridge pal of Gilmour's, whose sax solos added a new dimension to the Floyd sound.

Us and Them

A superb piece co-written by Waters and Wright. In time-honoured Floyd fashion this composition was based on another piece that had been lurking around for ages. The song's origins were in a piece rejected by Antonioni for *Zabriskie Point* called *The Violence Sequence*. Based on a chord sequence by Wright, Waters claimed the song was about, 'the political idea of humanism, and whether it could or should have any effect on any of us.' The lyrics range from going to war in the first verse, to themes of civil liberties, colour prejudice and civil rights in the second, and the thought of passing a down-and-out on the street and not helping in the third. The voices of sundry roadies and Wings guitarist Henry McCullough and his wife can be heard responding to Roger's flash cards. Dick Parry shines again on sax, replicating the breathy sound similar to that on *Gandharva* by US electronic duo Beaver & Krause.

Any Colour You Like

Written by Wright, Mason and Gilmour, this was an instrumental filler bridging *Us and Them* and *Brain Damage*. Originally called *Scat*, it features the ubiquitous sound of the VCS 3 synthesiser with a long tape echo, as well as more conventional instrumentation. The final title came from a favourite catchphrase of roadie, Chris Adamson, 'You can have it any colour you like'.

Brain Damage

This Roger Waters song is, perhaps, most strongly linked to Syd Barrett. As Waters later told *Mojo*, 'That was my song, I wrote it at home. The grass (as in the lunatic is on the grass) was always the square in between the River Cam and Kings College chapel. I don't know why but when I was young, that was always the piece of grass, more than any other piece of grass that I felt I was constrained to keep off. I don't know why, but the song still makes me think of that piece of grass. The lunatic was Syd, really. He was obviously in my mind. It was very Cambridge-based, that whole song.' The final line name-checks the title of the album, 'I'll see you on the dark side of the Moon,' and the maniacal laughter was by Pete Watts.

Eclipse

Sensing the album needed a proper conclusion, Roger Waters wrote *Eclipse*. The lyrics suggest that while the human race has the potential to live in harmony with nature and itself, this is depressingly never the case. Despite the gloomy lyrics, the song has an uplifting feel – sung by Waters, with Gilmour's harmonies and Doris Troy's voice thundering alongside them. It is Gerry O'Driscoll who adds the cryptic final spoken-word coda about the real nature of the dark side of the Moon.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

From Asbury Park to E Street

From humble beginnings in Freehold, New Jersey, to one of the biggest names in rock history, Bruce 'The Boss' Springsteen has captivated music fans for generations. In this article we take a look at the legacy of one of America's most enduring superstars, an icon that is still riding high in the charts to this day.

Bruce Springsteen once said, 'I want it all.' People these days often forget that, baffled by an artist whose musical output can switch, seemingly effortlessly, from the gung-ho R&B swing of classic rock albums like *Born to Run* or his biggest-seller, *Born In the USA*, to the heartrendingly stark acoustic outpourings of albums like *Nebraska* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

It's a confusion that goes right back to Springsteen's earliest days as a recording artist, when he was still seen as some sort of folksy troubadour in the tradition of Bob Dylan. However, for Springsteen there has never been any difference between the outgoing, crowd-pleaser that we hear on hits like *Hungry Heart* and the introspective loner of *Secret Garden*. As far as he was concerned, music was one of the few things in life that held no barriers. As Springsteen explained in a 1992 interview with *New York Newsday*, 'When I was young, I truly didn't think music had any limitations. I thought it could give you everything you wanted in life.'

For Robert Hilburn of the *LA Times*, Springsteen came to define 'the struggle in life between disillusionment and dreams.' Furthermore he suggested, 'The important thing about Bruce isn't that he makes you believe in rock 'n' roll or himself. He makes you believe in yourself.' While Dave Marsh of *Rolling Stone* suggested that Springsteen's best music was nothing less than 'a refutation of the idea that rock was anarchic rebellion. If anything his shows were a masterwork of crowd control, an adventure in pure cooperation, a challenge to chaos.'

As usual, it was Springsteen that put it best in his acceptance speech when *Streets of Philadelphia* won an Oscar in 1994, for Best Original Song In a Movie: 'You do your best work and you hope that it pulls out the best in your audience and some piece of it spills over into the real world and into people's everyday lives. And it takes the edge off fear and allows us to recognise each other through our veil of differences. I always thought that was one of the things popular art was supposed to be about, along with the merchandising and all the other stuff.'

Destined to become the blue-collar rock hero whose best songs represented the common experiences of everyday American people, Bruce Springsteen was born to working class Irish-Italian parents in the modest New Jersey town of Freehold, on 23 September 1949. His Irish father, Douglas Springsteen, was an-ex army recruit who later worked, variously, in a plastics factory, as a bus

Bruce Springsteen backstage at Hammersmith Odeon in London before his first UK show on 18 November 1975.

driver and a prison guard. Bruce was the first of three children and his Italian mother, Adele, worked hard to provide a home for them all. His early life was not without its inequities, however, and Springsteen would later recall the harsh nature of the Catholic school he attended as a child. One story, in particular, continued to haunt him into adulthood, when, as an eight-year-old, he got his Latin wrong and the nun who taught him stood him in the wastebasket telling him, 'that's what you are worth.'

As a result, he loathed school and learnt little other than what it was like to be the victim of intolerance and prejudice. When not in school, he liked hanging around on the beach and playing water sports. He was never a talkative boy, preferring to watch and listen, standing in the shadows taking it all in. As Springsteen would often explain to an audience in the mid-seventies, just before launching into one of his favourite songs from his childhood, The Animals' *It's My Life*, 'I grew up in this small town about twenty miles inland. I remember it was in this dumpy, two-storey, two-family house, next door to this gas station. And my mom, she was a secretary and she worked downtown. And my father, he worked a lotta different places, worked in a rug mill for a while, and he was a guard down at the jail for a while. I can remember when he worked down there, he used to come back real pissed off, drunk, sit in the kitchen. At night, about nine o'clock, he used to shut off all the lights, every light in the house. And he'd sit in the kitchen with a six-pack and a cigarette. [When I got home] I'd stand there in that driveway, afraid to go in the house, and I could see the screen door, I could see the light of my pop's cigarette. I used to slick my hair back real tight so he couldn't tell how long it was gettin' and try to sneak through the kitchen. But the old man, he'd catch me every night and he'd drag me back into that kitchen. He'd make me sit down at that table in the dark, and he would sit there tellin' me. And I can remember just sittin' there in the dark, him tellin' me… tellin' me, tellin' me, tellin' me. 'Pretty soon he'd ask me what I thought I was doin' with myself, and we'd always end up screamin' at each other. My mother she'd always end up runnin' in from the front room, cryin' and tryin' to pull him off me, try to keep us from fightin' with each other. And I'd always, I'd always end up runnin' out the back door, pullin' away from him, runnin' down the driveway, screamin' at him, tellin' him, tellin' him, tellin' him how it was my life and I was gonna do what I wanted to do.'

After seeing Elvis Presley on TV, Springsteen was inspired to start playing guitar at the age of nine. He got his first blasts of loud music from listening to the radio. 'It took over my whole life,' Bruce later explained, 'everything from then on revolved around music.' In those early days, US radio was not just the home of Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry; it was a direct route to another world, aimed at the very soul of a sprawling teenage America, from the rural heartlands to the inner city and boardwalks of Bruce's childhood. If it got on the radio that meant it usually got onto the juke-boxes of the numerous diners, soda fountains and truck stops that littered the nation too. This was where the teenage Bruce first got the idea that rock 'n' roll could matter, as well as entertain; could make you think as well as dance. It was a lesson he absorbed quickly, and one he never forgot: 'What I heard in the Drifters, in all that great radio music, was the promise of something else. Not a politician's promise… I mean the promise of possibilities… that the search and the struggle matter, that they affirm your life. That was the original spirit of rock 'n' roll.'

But if rock 'n' roll spelled freedom in the more general sense to countless millions of teenagers in the cultural melting pot of 1960s America, it took on quite literal properties to Springsteen, whose parents moved from Freehold down to San Francisco when he was

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Bruce Springsteen in performance during 1975.

seventeen. By then he had already formed his first band, the Castiles, and therefore remained behind in Jersey, moving into a scruffy one-room apartment above a drug store in nearby Long Branch.

It was around this time that Springsteen also began appearing occasionally as a solo act at the Café Wha? in Greenwich Village, the same venue in which a similarly young Dylan had first become recognised.

Reminiscing about this time spent commuting between Asbury Park and downtown New York Springsteen has stated, 'I was always popular in my little area and I needed this gig badly. I didn't have anything else. I wanted to be as big as you could make it… the Beatles, the Rolling Stones.'

Too poor to pay for his own entertainment, when he wasn't working he trod the boardwalks by the beach in Asbury. Outgoing and talkative onstage, in person he could be almost unbearably shy, mumbling his conversation and shuffling around in old clothes he looked like he'd slept in.

'Jersey,' he later bemoaned in a *Sounds* article in March 1974, was 'a dumpy joint. I mean it's OK, it's home, but… I guess it just took a long time for someone to think of something to write about it.'

It hardly seems credible now, but the teenage Springsteen's career nearly took a very different course when, in 1968, he received his draft papers into the US army. With the US then involved in the Vietnam war, like all new conscripts Bruce knew his chance of escaping the conflict without being maimed or killed was fifty percent at best, and years later he confessed that he and his buddies went out and got good and drunk the night before they were due to be inducted.

Fortunately Springsteen flunked his medical, in large part due to injuries he had sustained in a motorcycle accident some time before, and he returned home that day fearing the reaction such news would be greeted with by his ex-army father. Instead of disparaging the boy, however, Springsteen's father merely nodded and said, 'That's good, son.' The subject was never mentioned again; though it was something Bruce would return to in his own mind a great deal over the years, not least after news that the drummer in his first band, the Castiles, had been killed in the conflict.

In lieu of a military position, Springsteen spent most of his youth hanging out at a local teen club named the Upstage – an avowedly alcohol and drug free environment situated down by the Jersey shoreline which, nevertheless, stayed open till five every morning and where any passing kid with enough nerve could get up and play. This was where Springsteen and his friends first played as the Castiles, quickly followed by similarly short-lived but evermore adept outfits like Earth, Child, Steel Mill, Dr Zoom & The Sonic Boom and, finally in his early-twenties, the more prosaically-named Bruce Springsteen Band, a sprawling ten-piece back-up group (three members of which would later form part of his next legendary backing outfit, the E Street Band). E Street was actually where the mother of the band's original keyboard player, David Sancious, lived, in the Jersey neighbourhood of Belmar. Sancious had already left, however, by the time the classic E Street Band line-up had evolved. This line-up would include Garry 'Funky' Tallent on bass, 'Phantom' Danny Federici playing organ and accordion, Clarence 'Big Man' Clemons, a Virginia-born saxophonist and former James Brown sideman who joined in 1971, single-handedly replacing an entire horn section and a trio of girl back-up singers. There was also 'Mighty' Max Weinberg on drums, 'Professor' Roy Bittan playing the piano and glockenspiel, Bittan was the only non-Jersey boy, hailing from Far Rockaway, New York and finally the band was completed by 'Miami' Steve Van Zandt on rhythm guitar and backing vocals– Van Zandt was called 'Miami' because he had once been to Florida.

It wasn't until 1975 that the best-known line-up of the E Street Band came together, when Springsteen was already growing famous enough to attract Broadway show veterans like Weinberg and Bittan. Both these artists responded to an ad in *The Village Voice*, rather than simply gravitating towards the line-up from the local Shore club scene.

Before the group could achieve true success, Springsteen had to secure a record deal. Ironically, this only transpired once Springsteen had all but abandoned the idea of getting his own band off the ground. Years of opening for every band that came through town, from Black Oak Arkansas and Brownsville Station to Sha Na Na and Black Sabbath, had left him weary and disillusioned.

Springsteen commented years later, 'When we first started playing I'd go to every show expecting nobody to come, and I'd go onstage expecting nobody to give me anything for free. And that's the way you have to play. If you don't play like that, pack your guitar up, throw it in the trashcan and go home… The night I stop thinking that way, that's the night I won't do it anymore.'

Bruce later told *NME*, that he fell out of love with the idea of being in a band and, 'just started writing lyrics, which I had never done before. I would just get a good riff, and as long as it wasn't too obtuse I'd sing it… Last winter [1972] I wrote like a mad man… Had no money, nowhere to go, nothing to do… It was cold and I wrote a lot… I got to feeling guilty if I didn't.'

It was this batch of songs that would lead directly to his signing as a solo artist by Columbia Records, in New York, during May 1972. At first, the label's A&R chief, John Hammond, saw him as a potential successor to Bob Dylan; who he had also signed to the label some ten years before. In retrospect, it's easy to see why Hammond thought this way. Curly-haired and bearded, the twenty-three-year-old Springsteen definitely had something of the wordy Bob Dylan about him, especially in Springsteen's original songs like *Blinded By the Light* and *It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City*.

When recalling playing the bars and clubs of his youth, Bruce told *Zigzag* Magazine, 'you had to communicate on the most basic level… but when I talked to the record companies there was just me by myself with a guitar, and from that many false impressions were drawn.'

At the time, Dylan was a conspicuous influence on a generation of new young songwriters, many of whom had already suffered from the comparison; talented word-and-tunesmiths like John Prine and Loudon Wainwright III, struggled under Dylan's shadow throughout their early careers, the 'new Dylan' tag acting almost like a curse. Bruce, however, was not so easily subsumed.

Bruce Springsteen in concert during 1984.

Nevertheless, the comparisons were perhaps even more obvious in early Springsteen songs, and Mike Appel, Bruce's first manager has stated, 'Bruce is very garrulous. When I first came across Bruce it was by accident. But when I heard him play I heard this voice saying to me – superstar. I couldn't believe it. I'd never been that close to a superstar before.' Adding, 'Randy Newman is great but he's not touched. Joni Mitchell is great but she's not touched. Bruce is touched… he's a genius!'

It was Appel that had taken acetates of Springsteen's earliest songs to Hammond – a legendary figure at Columbia who had also signed such pre-Dylan luminaries as Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Tommy Dorsey and Woody Herman, to name just a few. Hammond listened to the acetate while Mike and Bruce sat patiently in the corner. 'Do you want to get your guitar out,' Hammond eventually asked, at which point Bruce broke into a spontaneous version of *It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City*. 'I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't believe it,' Hammond later recalled.

Intrigued by the rough recordings and charmed by the soft-spoken young

Bruce Springsteen performing live in October 1984.

protégé, Hammond had gone straight to the President of Columbia Records, Clive Davis, who famously rubber-stamped the whole deal after listening to just one track. Despite this success, it was still live on stage that the young Springsteen made the greatest impact, with his high octane performances contrasting with the habit of most contemporary singer songwriters, who tended to give a more low-profile performance, either sitting alone with their guitars or standing still in the spotlight.

Bruce had spent almost all his initial record advance putting a new band of musicians together, and hit the road as soon as his first album was released in March 1973, entitled *Greetings from Asbury Park N.J.*. Recorded at 914 Sound Studios, in Blauvelt, New York, and co-produced by Mike Appel and Jim Cretecos, the backing musicians featured on the record were drummer Vini 'Mad Dog' Lopez, saxophonist Clarence Clemmons, bassist Gary Tallent and keyboard player David Sancious – all of whom would go on to form the backbone of the next Springsteen live band. The album also featured session-men Harold Wheeler and Richard Davis. The album sleeve was based on a mock picture-postcard of Asbury Park, somewhat worn around the edges: a suitable visual metaphor for the forlorn picture of boardwalk life the music contained therein depicted. Upon release, the record was regarded, not unfairly, as overly self-conscious, with the lyrics tending to overshadow the music to an almost unprecedented degree, even for a would-be 'new Dylan'.

In spite of this criticism, Columbia chose to promote the album by releasing one of the most lyrically verbose songs from the record as the first single. *Blinded by the Light* was almost choking with words, and needless to say, it was not a hit, although Britain's Manfred Mann would score a No. 1 in the US charts with their more musically florid version of the song in 1976. Similarly, the critical reception for *Greetings from Asbury Park N.J.* was mostly positive, but somewhat lukewarm, and the album did not sell well either.

Nevertheless, there were several golden nuggets in amongst the slush-pile of songs. Not least one of the tracks that had helped secure Springsteen his record deal, the epochal *It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City*, which closed the album and pointed the way in which later, more musically adept Springsteen albums would evolve.

It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City was covered by David Bowie for his *Young Americans* album in 1975, and although it never made the final cut, Bowie, then enjoying the first flush of his huge worldwide success, let it be known how much he loved the album. Bowie expressed his admiration for *Greetings from Asbury Park N.J.* by recording a second track from the record, *Growin' Up*, and though that also failed to make the final *Young Americans* track-listing, the publicity was invaluable, and suddenly Springsteen had one of the most-discussed albums of 1973.

Other first-album tracks like *Spirit in the Night* and *Lost in the Flood* are also worth a special mention as they went on to become live favourites for years. *Spirit in the Night* was a funky R&B number you could actually dance to, unlike most of the other relentlessly edgy tracks on the album. Whilst, *Lost in the Flood* was an apocalyptic soul-bearer that prefigured some of Springsteen's later, more decidedly downbeat moments like *The River*. This was juxtaposed by *Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?* a song that sounded as if it could have been written for an earlier generation by a young, chain-smoking, Benzedrine-swallowing Jack Kerouac.

Despite the dense lyrical undergrowth of so much of the album, according to Springsteen much of it was actually written quickly with barely any second thoughts. Springsteen claimed that tracks like the ballad *For You* which recounted the final minutes of a life, and *The Angel* a view of life's highway taken astride a purring motorcycle, were written in under fifteen minutes. 'I see these situations happening when I sing them, and I know the characters well – they're probably based on people I know… It's like if you're walking down the street, that's

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what you see, but a lot of the songs were written without any music at all.'

Springfield later told *Zigzag* Magazine, 'That record reflects the mood I was in at that particular time… you know, the fact of having to come into the city from where I was living, and I didn't have a band so it all contributed to that kind of down feel. But towards the end of the record I started pulling out of it with songs like *Spirit in the Night* which started to get into a whole different feel.'

For all its virtues and critical support, *Greetings from Asbury Park N.J.* remains one of the least approachable of Springsteen's early albums. The record captured Bruce at his most determinedly tormented; so desperate to be taken seriously he appears, at times, to have forgotten what fun he used to have simply standing up there onstage singing. To his credit, it was a mistake that he would be careful not to repeat on his next album. Before Springsteen would start work on that, however, he and his band would complete over 200 gigs around the United States, sometimes supporting bigger established acts like Chicago, most often playing one-night shows at clubs and bars along the East Coast. It was a punishing schedule that left Bruce and his boys getting by on a couple of dollars each per day, dining on hamburgers and beer. But it was also an experience that proved to be the making of the band, tightening them up and helping flesh-out songs like *Spirit in the Night* and *For You*, songs that had sounded stilted on album, but were now sure-fire crowd-pleasers.

Bruce was also finding time to build in some of the new numbers he was writing with the band in mind; warmer, less wooden-sounding material like *Kitty's Back*, which centered around a lengthy crescendo-building keyboard intro from David Sancious, and had become one of the highlights of the set. With the newfound freedom and confidence his band was giving him, Springsteen suddenly sounded less like a poor man's Bob Dylan and more like a younger, more carefree Van Morrison. This was the backdrop that would lead to the recording of what would be the first really convincing Bruce Springsteen album, the joyously titled *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*. Recorded at the tail end of 1973 and released in February 1974, the second Springsteen album really captured what quickly became known as the signature E-Street sound. Indeed, in its varied and often esoteric choice of instrumentation, it remains one of the most adventurous musical statements either Springsteen or the E Street Band would ever make. Unusually, the album featured Bruce on acoustic and electric guitar, Danny Federici on accordion as well as keyboards, and Garry Tallent on tuba in addition to the bass.

"I'd go to every show expecting nobody to come, and I'd go onstage expecting nobody to give me anything for free. And that's the way you have to play."

It was also a record practically overflowing with syncopated beats, jazz riffs, soul horns and an array of typically colourful characters. As Springsteen explained, he had been searching for a sound that 'rocks a little differently – more in the rhythm and blues vein.' That he achieved this goal on his second album was almost entirely down to the band he had assembled, a fact partly acknowledged in the album's elongated title. Most prominent was the influence of Clarence Clemons, Garry Tallent and David Sancious, who between them had a wealth of experience playing soul, jazz and R&B on the black West Side of Jersey. The songs seem less stridently personal, and more story based; tracks like the wheezing *Wild Billy's Circus Story*, the jazzy *Incident On 57th Street* (which Springsteen was still introducing onstage as *Spanish Johnny*) and the dreamy *New York City Serenade*. Other highlights include the demi-title track, *E Street Shuffle*, which featured

Springsteen and the E Street Band in performance in October 1985.

gritty Stax-styled guitar, and even Springsteen's first full-blown love song, *4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy).*

Lyrically, all these new songs found the chief protagonist looking out instead of staring within. Best of all, there was for the first time a real sense of fun to be found in the record's grooves, as evidenced on the album's most effervescent moment, the raucous *Rosalita*. Later featured on their famous *The Old Grey Whistle Test* television performance, *Rosalita* was not only the highlight of the Springsteen live show, it was Bruce's own new favourite; the song that best captured the bristling energy he and his new band were able to summon forth when the spirit really took them.

Springsteen discussed *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* with *Sounds* Magazine in March 1974, just as the album was released in Britain; 'There was more of the band in there and the songs were written more in the way that I wanted to write. But I tend to change the arrangements all the time in order to present the material best… for instance *Sandy*. I like the way it is on the record but it was entirely different up until the night I recorded it and then I changed it. The mistake is when you start thinking that you are your songs. To me a song is a vision, a flash and what I see is characters and situations. I mean I've stood around carnivals at midnight when they're clearing up [as on *Wild Billy's Circus Story*] and I was scared, I met some dangerous people. As for Spanish Johnny's situation [in *Incident On 57th Street*]… I know people who have lived that life.'

"If you don't play like that, pack your guitar up, throw it in the trash can and go home... The night I stop thinking that way, that's the night I won't do it anymore."

He described his new band as 'a real spacey bunch of guys' and talked of his wish to perform in Britain, yet doubted it would be soon, in light of his hectic US touring schedule: 'It just goes on forever here, on and on.'

Despite disappointing sales figures for *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*, Springsteen's reputation as a live performer was growing with every fiery performance. Buoyed by this new celebrity status, Springsteen and the E Street Band set out on what would be their most ground breaking US tour yet.

Critical plaudits were now starting to pile up. One review, in particular, however, would capture the imagination of all who read it, building in resonance throughout the years to become the most oft-recalled epithet of Springsteen's long career. Jon Landau, who had given a largely glowing review to *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* in *The Real Paper*, the local arts magazine he edited in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was also the 26-year-old reviews editor of *Rolling Stone*. A music journalist that had already won the respect of the music industry by actually working in it as an occasional producer and A&R man, Landau produced the second MC5 album, *Back in the USA* and championed Maria Muldaur's breakthrough hit *Midnight at the Oasis*. Although he had not been familiar with Springsteen's work previously, Landau was intrigued enough by his second album to go along and check him out when he played at a local club named Charley's, in April 1974. The timing of Landau's arrival at his first Springsteen show was prescient. Not only was the band reaching its musical apotheosis after playing together on the road solidly for over a year, but Bruce himself was fast evolving into the consummate live performer we know today; introducing songs with little autobiographical vignettes that served to both explain and frame the songs he sang. A livewire one moment, quiet and contemplative the next, and backed by a band entirely simpatico both musically and personally, Springsteen astounded Landau with his

Springsteen on stage in October 1985.

performance that night. So much so that when Bruce and the band returned to Cambridge for a follow-up date a month later, opening for Bonnie Raitt at the Harvard Square Theatre, Landau made sure he had a front row seat.

Once again, he was stunned by what he saw. Raitt had allowed the young Springsteen to perform his full two-hour show and Landau left that night even more convinced of this newcomer's unbelievable talent. It also happened to be the night of the critic's twenty-seventh birthday and when he settled down a few night's later to pen his review, Landau concluded, 'I saw my rock 'n' roll past flash before my eyes. And I saw something else. I saw rock 'n' roll's future and its name is Bruce Springsteen.' Going on to enthuse that, 'Springsteen does it all. He's a rock 'n' roll punk, a Latin street poet, a ballet dancer, an actor, a poet joker, a bar band leader, hot-shit rhythm guitar player, extraordinary singer and a truly great rock 'n' roll composer… he parades in front of his all star rhythm band like a cross between Chuck Berry, early Bob Dylan and Marlon Brando. Every gesture, every syllable adds something to his ultimate goal – to liberate our spirit while he liberates his by baring his soul through his music.'

Yet it was that one telling phrase, 'I saw rock 'n' roll's future and its name is Bruce Springsteen' – that was destined to become the most oft-repeated quote of Springsteen's career. Columbia Records were quick to see the possibilities and immediately began running ads in all the music press for the new album, purloining Landau's memorable idiom.

A judgement guaranteed to be seen as the throwing of a hat into the ring by other critics, by the time the UK music press had picked up on it, the line had turned into the less accurate but even more memorable, 'I have seen the future of rock 'n' roll and its name is Bruce Springsteen'. Or simply, 'Bruce Springsteen is the future of rock 'n' roll'.

Naturally, there were those who found such sentiments ill conceived at best, or downright scabrous at worst, and immediately set about proving Landau's theory wrong. With only the admirably written and played, but woefully under produced second album to go on, most British critics pooh-poohed the whole idea and Springsteen was suddenly in danger of being written off as just record company 'hype', about the worst crime any young singer-songwriter wishing to be taken seriously could be accused of in those days. Right or wrong, above all Landau's proclamation had the effect of raising the bar of critical expectation for whatever Springsteen did next. From here on in, whatever he did, be it a concert tour, new album, or even just an interview, it would no longer be enough for him merely to be good. As the official 'future of rock 'n' roll' whatever he did next would always have to be great. As such, Landau's heartfelt but unbridled enthusiasm became a cross the young singer would have to bear for the rest of his career. The question was: after an introduction like that, how would he ever be able to live up to it? The answer would come with his next album; the one he was telling friends he'd already decided to call *Born to Run*.

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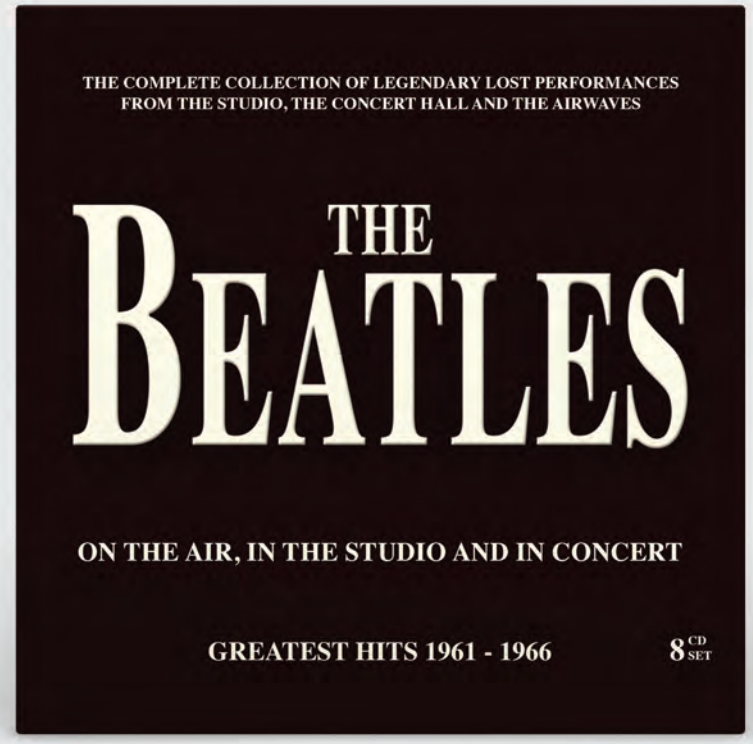
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Fleetwood Mac

The Making of *Rumours*

As 1975 rumbled in, Fleetwood Mac was on the prowl for more band members, yet little did they know of the incredible impact these artists would have on the future of the band and the face of rock music. Inspiring a selection of the most outstanding albums Fleetwood Mac ever recorded, Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks rocketed the group to heights of fame and fortune that utterly eclipsed the Peter Green era.

New Year's Eve 1974 found Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks at their lowest ebb for some time, until the phone rang and their lives were never the same again. That's just rock 'n' roll for you: one never knows what's coming next.

Fleetwood had met Buckingham and Nicks at Sound City Studios in LA, on a spontaneous visit that had more to do with a trip to the supermarket than finding new members for his band. The pair were working on some songs for a new album, but hadn't really had any luck with their previous efforts and were on the point of calling it a day, when in walked Mick Fleetwood. Keith Olsen brought Fleetwood to Sound City to consider the merits of the studio for rent, rather than the errant musicians who happened to be there, but Fleetwood's ears pricked up when he heard Buckingham play and he knew he'd found the next guitarist for the band. Unfortunately he wasn't looking for any other musicians than a guitar player, however, when he got in contact with Buckingham and Nicks it was obvious they lived, worked and dreamt as a duo, so it would be both of them or nothing.

Fleetwood made one of the best choices for the listening public when he decided to give the pair a break. He was already hoping to change the musical direction of his band, as the previous album had floundered, and here he had found new song writing blood in the form of Stevie Nicks. So it was, that the tenth line-up of Fleetwood Mac was born in a downtown studio in LA. What none of them knew at the time was that the melting pot of their musical talent provided a dynamic chemistry on stage and in the studio; a chemistry that changed all their fortunes forever.

Mick Fleetwood later commented on this initial jam session stating, 'The first time we played together was in the basement of our agent's office, and it was at that point the real, true excitement came. It was very apparent that something was really happening. It was very much like when the band first started.'

Christine McVie was slightly more reticent about having another woman in the band. Not that she was possessive or controlling in any way, but she knew that one female amongst a band of rock 'n' roll men was complex enough, especially considering the band's track record of incestuous relationships and general shenanigans. She summed up the situation quite succinctly, saying, 'Mick and John said to me, "If you don't like the girl, then we can't have either of them, because they are a duo." The last thing I was thinking about at the time was to have another girl in the band. I had been so used to being the only girl.' However, Christine's concerns were soon assuaged, 'We met them both. We all really got on well together. Stevie was a bright, very humorous, very direct, tough little thing. I liked her instantly, and Lindsey too.'

Stevie Nicks during a performance in 1976.

Mick Fleetwood still had his work cut out convincing Warner Brothers that this new incarnation of the band was the best thing yet, and that the next album was going to prove to the suits and to the fans that Fleetwood Mac were back. With hindsight, it's easy to wonder what all the fuss was about, knowing as we do that the band were on the verge of a major breakthrough, but in the mid-seventies, Fleetwood Mac were still just a rocking, folky, blues band that had by all intents and purposes passed their sell-by date. The band were seen as trying to make headway in a music market that had already written off their particular genre of music as old, faded, worn-out and highly unlikely to appeal to the kids. Up to this point, Fleetwood Mac's major impact had been in the United States, leaving Britain and Europe rather nonplussed about the group's appeal. The band had a bizarre seesaw effect with their record sales on either side of the Atlantic, where albums and singles that did well in the States hardly scored in England, and the one or two that sank without a trace on the US hit parade invariably did better in the UK. This made it very difficult to

Lindsey Buckingham, Stevie Nicks and John McVie on stage in 1977.

know where and to whom they wanted to target their next offering.

One thing was certain though; they weren't going to waste any time debating the issues, so, less than a month after the group first got together they headed back to Sound City Studios in LA to begin work on the album they would simply call *Fleetwood Mac*.

It could be said that the hassles over the group's name and the doubts as to whether Fleetwood Mac could rise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of so many line-up changes, encouraged them to state their name boldly on the album as a gesture of solidarity. It perhaps also served to convince anybody who had any doubts, after the court case with Clifford Davis, over who owned the name – it was definitely Fleetwood Mac. The desire to get cracking in the studio and come up with an album meant the band didn't have a lot of time to get to know the new members, so the album was created by bringing together individual styles rather than the members working together as a cohesive unit.

Thus, Buckingham and Nicks added in their back catalogue of songs, which made up virtually half of the material, while Christine McVie and the rhythm section covered the remainder of the tracks, except for one cover song – the Curtis Brothers' *Blue Letter*. A track that served to prove Stevie Nicks had been a strong addition to the band, was the beautiful *Rhiannon*, a wonderfully crafted ballad about a Welsh witch that was to become one of the band's most popular songs and one that became a firm fixture at gigs.

Christine's *Sugar Daddy* also became one of the band's staples, whilst *Over My Head* and *Say You Love Me* showed that she had by no means lost her talent for writing top-class lyrics and melodies. The album *Fleetwood Mac* was released in July 1975, and didn't take long to reach the prestigious No. 1 position in the American album charts.

Christine summed up the appeal of Fleetwood Mac ruminating, 'I think we were just a product that everybody wanted at the time. It was a very versatile album, and on stage the band projected a kind of exciting image, a new sort of image, which hadn't been seen before. It was unique to have two women in a band who where not just back-up singers, or singers period… The five characters on stage became five characters, as opposed to just five members of the band.'

Fleetwood Mac's astounding success also could be a product of the changes their audience was undergoing at that time. By the mid-seventies, the music-listening public from the sixties had grown up. They were no longer a bunch of reprobate teenagers, all taking their clothes off for the first time and running around the festival fields while singing hymns to 'peace and love, man'. They had seen what war, and in particular Vietnam, had done to a lot of young people. They had witnessed the race riots and the protest marches. They had matured, and by the mid-seventies they wanted a kind of music and lyric that reflected that older viewpoint. The appeal of twenty-minute lead guitar and drum solos was beginning to wane; they were looking for something a bit deeper and more melodic.

Where the charts are concerned, it often doesn't matter how amazing songs are, or how well they're produced; it comes down to public opinion as to what sells, what doesn't sell, and, most importantly, what goes platinum. Sometimes the oddest and least commercial song can cut right through all the noise of the music industry, and by sheer public demand creates a monster hit. At other times an artist can turn out an album that is at least as good as its predecessor, only to find the listening audience has moved on and doesn't want

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FLEETWOOD MAC – RHIANNON & OTHER TALES

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This limited edition vinyl album features a rare Fleetwood Mac live show from September 1975, when Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham were just beginning to make their mark on the group. At this point they had released the *Fleetwood Mac* album that formed a large part of the set, but were also still performing some of the hits from the group's more blues oriented material. With the best of both worlds – this is a rare opportunity to enjoy Buckingham's take on early material such as *The Green Manalishi* and *Hypnotised*.

FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

Spare Me a Little of Your Love, **Rhiannon**, **Landslide**, **Over My Head**, **The Green Manalishi**, **Oh Well**, **World Turning**, **Blue Letter** and **Hypnotised**.

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Stevie Nicks in 1979.

that kind of sound any more. Punk rock, which was about to break in the UK, provided a perfect example of this, when virtually overnight, courtesy of the Sex Pistols, a whole genre of ballad-writing, folky, bluesy artists found themselves to be classed miserably as last week's news.

The key aspect to Fleetwood Mac's appeal was that their songs had intelligence, a maturity of content and a style that reflected the values and lifestyle of their audience. This is why, when all the hype had died down and the record executives had lost interest, the album continued to get airplay on a diverse range of stations in America, and therefore managed to stay in the US Top 10 for well over a year. Meanwhile, back in the UK, it was the same seesaw sales conundrum, with the band struggling to make headway in either the singles or album charts. It must have been a depressing situation for the Brits in the band, but Mick Fleetwood was characteristically forthright in his summation of it all recognising, 'We were primarily interested in getting out of England altogether. The band wasn't working in England. At that point we were playing more and more over here, the States. Also, I thought England was very grey and full of depressed people. We just got out.'

The huge sales figures generated by the *Fleetwood Mac* album went way beyond the band's expectations. They had always sold comfortable amounts, but had not yet ascended to platinum status. 'We've always kept a low profile,' John McVie explained, 'away from hype. That's the way we are. We never wanted to be viewed or reported as the biggest thing since sliced bread. Me, Chris and Mick have been working together for a long time. We've eaten every day and always had money for smokes. I'm proud we pushed ahead. The success now makes some justification for the efforts of the past.'

Following on from the band's album success, Warner Brothers decided to go ahead and release one of the songs as a single. Christine's *Over My Head* was put out and made an immediate impact, which further broadened the band's fan base in America.

This was their first chart-topper in the singles market since Peter Green's offerings in the late sixties. This says a lot about how the way record labels used to look after their artists. Today, if an act doesn't have a steady stream of chart topping singles, or at least a huge blockbuster album, it's likely they will find their contract expires and won't be renewed. Back in the sixties and seventies, the music industry took a longer-term view and nurtured talent, and naturally, having produced such a fine album, the time came to take it out on the road.

Until this point, a pattern had been emerging now of how Fleetwood Mac operated: get a new line-up of musicians together, record an album, release a single, go on tour, go crazy, lose a band member or two, get a new line-up, record an album, and repeat. So it was surprising that Fleetwood Mac survived the tour of 1975 with no casualties. Buckingham and Nicks were keen to prove their worth, so they didn't mind roughing it from time to time with all the rigours of being on the road. Nicks has since recalled the tour reminiscing, 'There were no limousines and Christine slept on top of the amps in the back of the truck. We just played everywhere and we sold that record. We kicked that album in the ass.'

Meanwhile, the old hands were intent on showing the newcomers just what a professional outfit they were. The result was a stupendous tour with a fresh sound and image for the band. This irresistible combination went down a storm with the existing fans and won the band even more new followers. The tired and worn-out blues numbers were abandoned to the Fleetwood Mac back catalogue while the bright, tight, West Coast production and delivery of rock and pop ballads had fans filling the aisles. Any doubts the long-term blues devotees had regarding

the band were instantly dispelled upon seeing the exciting stage show, which now included not just one, but two rock starlets. Accompanying the divas on stage were the thumping drums and bass of Fleetwood, the clean, proficient guitar work of Lindsey Buckingham and the foot-stomping rhythm of John McVie.

The 1975 *Fleetwood Mac* tour, with the definitive tenth line-up, probably found them at their happiest and most dynamic for many years. Yet, it was not long before hairline fissures started appearing in the band's makeup. Buckingham was already feeling the strain that playing somebody else's music has on a musician. Being a decidedly independent man and wanting to retain his personal style made it hard for Buckingham to dovetail sweetly into playing Bob Welch songs without a second thought, but he persevered, perhaps because Nicks seemed to be enjoying the trip and felt more at home in the group than he did.

From August through to December 1975, Fleetwood Mac were on the road, gigging virtually every night and working hard to sell the new album, the new band, and the new look. The tour was naturally a chance for the band really to get to know one another and to establish their core identity, and without the excess and isolation that came with their later fame, Fleetwood Mac was able to bond as a unit. The tour had the effect of smoothing out any glitches in their performances and creating that natural rapport that is so important between band members on stage.

Despite their live success, Fleetwood Mac now faced strong pressure from their record label and the business side of the music industry, so in 1976, Warner decided to release *Rhiannon* as a single.

Fortunately *Rhiannon* proved an immediate hit, and did much to vindicate Stevie Nicks's place in the band as well as relieving some of the pressure from Warner. After *Rhiannon*, Christine's *Say You Love Me* was released to similar success, however this was sadly only true of their sales in the US, as at that point in the mid-seventies, Fleetwood Mac were still finding it hard to get anywhere in the British charts.

For example, when *Rhiannon* was put out as a single in Britain it struggled lamentably to make the Top 100, let alone the Top Twenty. The single's highest recorded chart position was a miserable No. 46. The difficulty the Fleetwood Mac experienced in Britain was more than likely due, in some small measure, to the loyalty showed by the fans to Peter Green's version of the band, which was a blues and rock outfit rather than rock and pop. Back in 1975 and 1976, the music industry in Britain was turning out the last of the glitter bands before the advent of punk came along to reshape musical tastes indefinitely.

Stevie Nicks performing in 1979.

Much of the listening public felt somewhat lost. Having been raised on the Beatles and the Stones, and being used to taking the seminal trips experienced growing up with bands like the Pink Floyd, Frank Zappa or Bob Dylan, rock fans were now expected to lap up the Bay City Rollers and Donny Osmond. It was a tough time for many listeners, and although these bands were the teeny-bop chart makers, they still dominated the radio airwaves and television performances of the era.

The in-your-face brutality of punk was the natural successor to this trend, as the commercially produced hit makers that went before seemed so paper-thin and soulless in comparison. At least Sid Vicious seemed like he really meant it. It was into this UK music culture, that Fleetwood Mac was trying to sell what was seen as out-dated arena pop rock. The kind of people who were British blues music fans, and who had taken on board Peter Green's immense talent, were not keen to accept what was seen as a less noble substitute. Comparatively in the States, musical appreciation was a far more fluid affair and didn't have a countrywide basis; one trend could be kicking off in New York while an entirely different scene was breaking through on the West Coast.

Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham on stage in Summer 1980.

This meant that the American audience was more open to what Fleetwood Mac was trying to achieve. It sounds odd by today's standards, but to have two women providing the creativity and, more importantly, fulfilling the job of a front man was something of a novel concept in the mid-seventies. Most rock bands were utterly devoted to the concept of having a male rock god out there fronting the group. Female performers were for the most part either successful solo singers or banished to the harmony department. For such macho figures as Mick Fleetwood and John McVie to relinquish this age-old status was revolutionary, and something of a revelation for the time.

More to the point, the approach proved highly successful. Stephanie Nicks, as she was first named, shone as the group's feisty lead singer. She was the foxy lady personified, and exuded that kind of passionate, fiery aura that Mick Jagger achieved with his lips and hips. Putting the attractive duo of Nicks and Christine McVie together on stage proved to be a highly lucrative combination, as American audiences were more likely to accept a good image even if the product wasn't completely ready.

At this time Stevie Nicks must have felt like she was living in a fairy tale, going from rags to riches in less than a year. The one-time waitress and cleaner found herself propelled to the dizzy heights of rock's royalty faster than you can say 'millionaire'. Many people might have lost themselves in such a rapid transition from anonymity to stardom, and it says volumes about her character, and perhaps about how solid she was in her hippie ideals, that Stevie didn't let it all go to her head. As 1976 unfolded it became clear that the band's success had divided Stevie and Lindsey, while John and Christine were as usual living in separated disharmony. Mick, who was supposed to be the solid, father-type figure of the band, was pressed to the point of splitting with his wife and divorcing her – before they got remarried, and then divorced once more. It probably would have been worthwhile for Fleetwood Mac to have employed a marriage guidance counsellor on the permanent payroll of back then, as he or she would have certainly had some serious work to do.

Despite all this emotional turmoil going on behind the scenes, each member had a strong commitment to the band that kept them going. Somehow, they never let personal problems supersede the demands of the group. No matter what, Fleetwood Mac and the fans came first and foremost in all their lives, and the band members were self-aware enough to realise they'd never get such a chance to make it big again. Amidst the soap opera, Warner Brothers were on their case looking for another album and the next string of hits. Rather than succumbing to the emotional divides in the band, the songwriters went away and put it all down in material that would make the next album. That this album would be the greatest breakthrough for the group and one of its all-time best sellers says something about the nature of the creative process and its relationship to trauma.

It was Eric Clapton who admitted that there was nothing worse than being happily ensconced in a relationship to dry up all his creative juices. He went as far as purposely wrecking any stable relationship with his partner just so he could come up with a bit of angst and few good tunes for his next album. This was one problem that Fleetwood Mac never suffered, for there was no shortage of stress and arguments between the couples in the band, and such troubled waters led them to produce some of their lifetimes' best work in the shape of *Rumours*. The comings and goings of each band member had certainly given the West Coast press more than enough to chew on, and it was this capitalising on seedy, showbiz gossip that prompted the band to call the album *Rumours*.

With their choice of album title, it seemed the group had maintained their

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This limited edition vinyl album features the live Fleetwood Mac broadcast from Inglewood on 21 October 1982. The band was working hard to replicate the success of *Rumours*, and set out to showcase just what they could do on the *Mirage* tour. This release provides a powerful snapshot of Fleetwood Mac at the top of their game on that tour, performing a stunning selection of their hits in concert.

FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

The Chain, **Rhiannon**, **Gypsy**, **You Make Loving Fun**, **Tusk**, **I'm So Afraid**, **Go Your Own Way** and **Songbird**.

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Christine McVie (left) and Lindsey Buckingham (centre) in performance during the Tusk tour.

sense of humour – or perhaps just a healthy sense of irony. Christine McVie later discussed the album reflecting, 'The outcome of the various separations and emotional upheavals in the band that caused so many rumours are in the songs. We weren't aware of it at the time, but when we listened to the songs together, we realised they were telling little stories. We were looking for a good name for the album that would encompass all that, and the feeling that the band had given up, the most active rumour flying about. And I believe it was John, one day, who said we should call it *Rumours*.'

In 1976, Fleetwood Mac withdrew to the Record Plant studio in Sausalito, California with producer Richard Dashut to record the songs that were coming out of this difficult period. However, it turned out to be so stressful that eventually the group went out on the road just to relieve the tension that being cooped up in a studio had brought. This gave Fleetwood Mac an opportunity to test out some of the new songs they had been working on and provided a good level of feedback, so that when they returned to recording again they had a fresh idea of what was working for the fans and what wasn't going down so well. Instead of carrying on at the Record Plant studio, they shifted back to LA, and eventually recorded parts of the album in no less than four different studios.

The services of Keith Olsen had been discarded, not through any major problems with his work, but because the band wanted to take greater control of what was happening at the mixing desk. They now exhibited the kind of confidence in themselves that favourable record sales encouraged, and were keen to stamp their individual characters firmly on the album called *Rumours*.

> "The way we approach it is more like the way the Beatles used to approach their thing in the studio; having a general idea and then going into the studio and letting the spontaneity happen."
>
> **Lindsey Buckingham**

Taking this desire to have greater control over all the aspects of producing the albums and touring the band, Mick Fleetwood and John McVie set up their own managerial company, rather amusingly called Seedy Management. The bulk of the responsibility for this enterprise fell on Mick's shoulders, 'We're much less insulated,' he said, explaining their ethos, 'because I make sure everybody knows what's going on. An outside manager has a tendency to try to make it look as though everything is going smoothly even when it's not. I think we've got complete peace of mind. I think, for instance, that if someone from outside had been handling this band we would have probably broken up when there were problems. This band is like a highly tuned operation, and wouldn't respond to some blunt instrument coming in. There's a trust between all of us that would make that a problem.'

John McVie was particularly proud of their efforts and was keen to point out that, 'The hardest thing for people in the business to accept is the fact that the band achieved all that it has without professional help. Some people still think that Mick's just a dumb drummer and I'm a dumb bass player.'

Stevie Nicks in performance during the Tusk tour.

Most of the past work the band had done in the studio in the past had been recorded live, with the necessary overdubs going on later, but with *Rumours* Fleetwood Mac chose to take a new approach, preferring instead to build up the songs layer by layer. They still, however, did everything they could to retain some verve and vibe in the process.

'The way we approach it,' Lindsey mused, 'is more like the way the Beatles used to approach their thing in the studio; having a general idea and then going into the studio and letting the spontaneity happen. There was nothing specifically worked out when we went into the studio. We didn't have demo tapes like the last time. The whole thing just happened. That's where you capture the magic.'

Of course, such luxury during the recording process is only accorded to extremely successful bands, and even though Fleetwood Mac could warrant these expenses, the moguls at Warner Brothers were getting jumpy at the huge costs involved. This was usually where the band's manager would take the brunt of the flak, so unfortunately it fell to Mick Fleetwood to go to Warner and assure them that a product was on the way and would be worth the wait. Boldly, he didn't even allow them to hear any of the rough mixes, preferring instead to keep the project under wraps. Had they known what was going down in all these several studios and with all these diverse songwriters, Warner would have been less worried, but Fleetwood never had massive sympathy for the business side of the music industry, and it delighted the group to have the power for once.

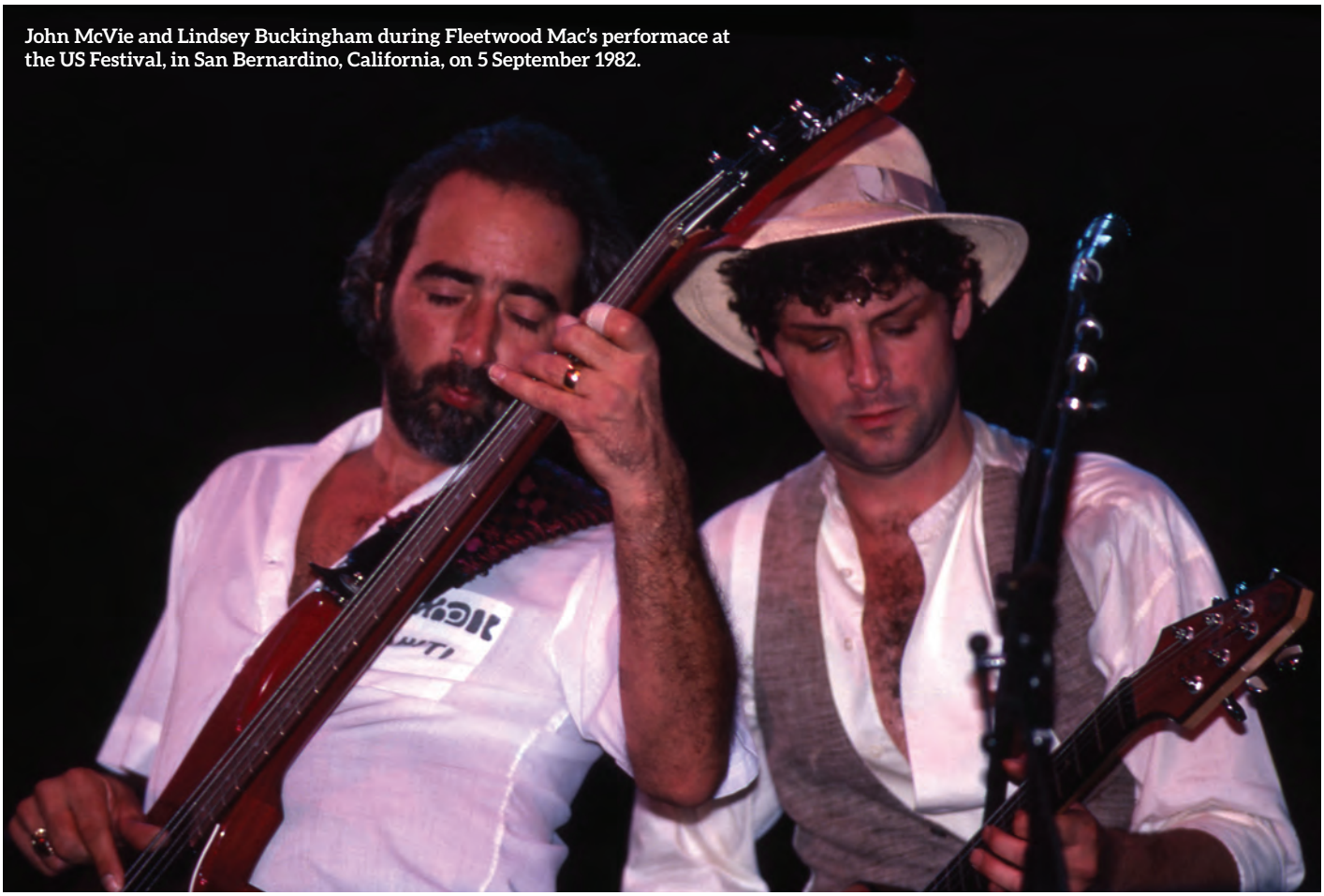
> "All my songs are personal. They are all about things which did happen. The only way I can be is honest. I can't make up a song. I promised myself... I would never lie in my songs."
>
> **Stevie Nicks**

Despite this confidence, Christine had been having a few doubts and the odd moment of panic as she was finding it hard to come up with any new material.

It seemed as if for once her music had deserted her. Then one day, as she later recalled, 'I just sat down and wrote in the studio, and the four or four and a half songs of mine on the album are a result of that.'

This was an incredible statement; were it not for that single day's inspiration in the studio, the world might only have had half of the masterpiece that was to become *Rumours*. Lindsey was also having a few doubts about the whole situation, feeling that his songs weren't coming out how he wanted them to sound once the band got a hold of them. However, faced with Mick's take-it-or-leave-it attitude, he settled down somewhat and agreed to relinquish some control for the good of enterprise as a whole.

Meanwhile, Nicks summed up her way of writing songs by saying, 'All my songs are personal. They are all about things that did happen. The only way I can be is honest. I can't make up a song. I can't make up a story. I promised myself from when I was sixteen years old and wrote my first song about the break-up from my boyfriend Steve that I would never lie in my songs. I would not say, "I broke up with him", if the truth was he broke up with me. I would stay clearly truthful to the people.'



John McVie and Lindsey Buckingham during Fleetwood Mac's performace at the US Festival, in San Bernardino, California, on 5 September 1982.

This may or may not have been a good philosophy to have, depending on where a person stood in the lifeline of Stevie Nicks. With her relationship to Lindsey still hanging precariously in the balance, we can bet that most of her love songs on *Rumours* concern their past, particularly *Dreams*. In a reflection of this from the other side of the mirror, Lindsey's *Go Your Own Way* was a none-too-subtle clap back on how he felt about the situation. Ironically, when the powers that be at Warner finally demanded to hear a preview of the album, that was the track that Fleetwood offered up. As the song finished there was a stunned silence from the thoroughly impressed record company, and the project was left to develop unmolested.

On the strength of that one track it was clear Fleetwood Mac were onto something really special. All in all, it took fourteen months to complete the recording of *Rumours*, plus a further five months just to mix it, and Warner Brothers were not able to release the album until February 1977.

Go Your Own Way had been released as a single just before Christmas 1976, as a taster of the forthcoming album for the fans, and also to assuage the concerns of the increasingly desperate record label. The single nudged its way swiftly into the Top 10 and was a portent of the gold mine that was to come when the album hit the charts –Fleetwood Mac could practically have paved the streets with gold blocks from the incredible sales this album netted them. Within a year, Fleetwood Mac had managed the amazing feat of having sold nearly ten million copies of *Rumours*, with the album sitting pretty at the No. 1 slot for over six months. At the height of the fans' feeding frenzy, up to a quarter of a million copies were being sold every week.

It is difficult to imagine such impressive sales figures, however to give some scope, any band that sells 100,000 copies of an album in total is usually moderately satisfied with that as a result. Considering that some of Fleetwood Mac's earlier albums were only shifting a maximum of 10,000 copies in the UK, it's easy to see what an achievement *Rumours* really was. The period surrounding the album's release was an incredible time for the band, with each of them rushing out to buy mansions and fleets of top-of-the-range sports cars, or vintage cars, which were Fleetwood's particular weakness. Christine summed up the wealth issue and how it had affected the band by saying, 'It's enabled all of us to realise a few dreams that we never thought would happen, but I haven't ego-ed out. I'm pretty much of a recluse, as it happens. What has this done, though? Well, the doors have just opened. Now I have the money to get my studio sculpture together, and the whole way of looking at my life has expanded over the last six months.'

This article is an extract from **Rumour, Tango & Mask**, the Fleetwood Mac Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

Blackened, **For Whom the Bell Tolls**, **Welcome Home (Sanitarium)**, **Leper Messiah**, **Harvester of Sorrow**, **Eye of the Beholder**, **To Live Is to Die**, **Master of Puppets**, **One**, **Seek and Destroy**, **... And Justice for All**, **How Many More Times?**, **Creeping Death**, **Fade to Black**, **Battery**, **Last Caress**, **Am I Evil?**, **Wherever I Roam** and many more.

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EAGLES

Joe Walsh on the Making of *Hotel California*

Today *Hotel California* holds the impressive title of the seventh best selling album of all time, however success does not always come easy. Joe Walsh and producer Bill Szymczyk give their recollections of the path to, and the making of this classic album.

Joe Walsh was born on 20 November 1947 in Wichita, Kansas. Walsh's mother was a classically trained pianist and encouraged her son to play a variety of musical instruments. Apart from the guitar, Walsh also dabbled with piano, clarinet, trombone and oboe, before joining his first band, the G-Clefs: 'That was my high school band. We had a drummer, a guitar player and another guitar player. That was the band, and we played all kinds of parties and proms and bar mitzvahs, whatever. I don't know where the others are these days – they were high school friends.'

Next came the Nomads: 'Actually, the Nomads were pretty good. We had Beatle jackets and black ties. I played bass in that band and I had my little bass amp with my twelve-inch speaker. We did all kinds of English things and Rolling Stones songs and all that. That was it right to the end of high school.' After that, Walsh attended Kent State University in Ohio. Neil Young wrote the song *Ohio* about an infamous incident at Kent State, when in May 1970, troops from the Ohio National Guard shot and killed four students and wounded nine others who were protesting about the American invasion of Cambodia. Walsh had attended the university some time before that, of course.

At the university, he was a member of a band called the Measles: 'Yeah, The Measles was the college band. I lasted three semesters in college and decided that was it. I happened to stay through the summer playing downtown with the Measles, and two things happened. My girlfriend stopped talking to me and for the first time I was on my own, my parents weren't supporting me anymore. So there I was, at eighteen or nineteen, just totally self-dependent and made about twenty bucks a night and all the beer you can drink. That lasted for a couple of years – we just played downtown all the time and that way I got to know everybody in Kent.' Which was where he met Jim Fox, a drummer and vocalist who was the leader of a band known as The James Gang.

Walsh recalled, 'There were all these rival bands. The James Gang was really the rival band in Cleveland, we were down around Akron, and Joey Vitale was in a rival band down in Canton. You know, we really didn't talk to each other very much. I wasn't friends with Vitale for a long time because we used to try to steal each other's gigs and stuff. But the Measles fell apart – one of the guys decided to go in the army for some reason, and the group just fell apart. After a while, Jimmy asked me to join The James Gang up in Cleveland, which I did.'

Bill Szymczyk, was working as a house producer at ABC Records, and had enjoyed some success working with the great B.B. King. Szymczyk, who produced B.B.'s first US Top 20 hit single, *The Thrill Is Gone*, reflected, 'All the time I was doing those albums with B.B., I was going out to Cleveland to see some friends of mine who lived there, and I saw this band out there, a three piece band that sounded like a ten piece. I said "Boy, that guitar player's good", and it was Joe Walsh playing with The James Gang.'

Walsh: 'I never played lead up till then. I played rhythm, played organ on *Louie Louie* and sang *Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying*, that was my highlight of the evening. The James Gang went

Joe Walsh on stage in 1975.

from five people down to three. It was instantaneous because two guys decided not to come, and we didn't know that till we showed up at the concert. So we had three people and just decided to go ahead and do it because we'd driven up to Detroit. We went on as three people and pulled it off pretty good. Over that next year or so, I really got some chops up playing lead guitar. The school of thought in the bands I'd always been in was that if you played a record note for note, that's the way to do it, so I never even bothered to improvise or anything.'

Szymczyk: 'I went back to ABC and told them that I wanted to sign this band. They said "What? Now you want to sign bands? We've got enough on the roster" and I said, "That's true, but I don't like any of those acts. Let me have this guy and his band", so they agreed to sign The James Gang for a $1,700 advance, which was Walsh's first contract – $1,700 which the three of them split – and we made *Yer Album*, the first James Gang LP.'

Walsh tells the story slightly differently: 'After I met Jimmy [Fox], Bill Szymczyk met us through a friend. He had just signed up with ABC and wanted to produce a rock 'n' roll group. He got us a record contract for $1,700 – that's what we got – and we bought a van with that money and started playing all over. Over the next year we did that first James Gang album, and that was the first rock album he'd done that got any recognition.'

At that point, the great Pete Townshend of The Who entered the picture. Walsh: 'That was just before our second album, *James Gang Rides Again*. We had played with Pete in Pittsburgh because our manager was the promoter of The Who concert, and he put us on the show. It was a strange combination of things. They happened to come early, one of those few times a band member will go out and see who the act is playing in front of them. It was the three-piece group and we were heavy metal, you know, this and that, and I guess Pete kind of identified, so he took me under his wing there. He invited us to come over to England and play.'

Townshend proved to be a great inspiration to Walsh: 'Yeah, he was amazing. He really talked to me a lot and helped me and introduced me to a bunch of people. You know we got so much mileage off his saying the nice things he did about The James Gang, especially over here. Now we could come over and play the tour and all, that saved us maybe a year of hard work.'

When his time with The James Gang ended in 1971, Walsh was invited to join Humble Pie, the theoretical super group that initially featured Steve Marriott, of Small Faces, and Peter Frampton from The Herd: 'Yeah, I got a call from Steve Marriott and almost went, but I couldn't swing it and my manager wasn't real happy about it. He didn't want me to leave The James Gang at all. I was young and didn't know how to come over here. I didn't know anything about it and I had to do it all myself, and it just didn't work. Almost though! Another six months and I quit The James Gang because it had been together for three or four years and I wanted to do something else. I moved to Colorado, went and hung out with Szymczyk. Right around that period was when I did Barnstorm.'

This was when Walsh started leading his own band, Barnstorm, with his erstwhile rival from another Ohio band, Joe Vitale, on drums and the then unknown Kenny Passarelli on bass: 'Tommy Bolin, who had played with Kenny at High School, gave me his number. He said "There's this guy who's up in Canada. He's real good, but he's nuts." So I called Kenny. He had just got his wisdom teeth extracted, so he didn't even remember that I called. I had to call him again a week later, and he drove down in his 1937 Chevy with an upright bass in the back seat, non-stop from Vancouver, and said, "Here I am!" I said to him, "This is the drummer. That's it, that's all I've got."'

Despite his success with The James Gang, it was a problem for Walsh to get a record deal for Barnstorm: 'Yeah, it was. I bumped into a bunch of stuff from leaving The James Gang. It was hard, it took a long time and I didn't know what I was doing either, half the time.'

Eventually, the *Barnstorm* album appeared in the autumn of 1972, spending six months in the US album chart but peaking outside the Top 75. It was produced by Szymczyk, who

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On Monday 25 April 1994, after a fourteen year hiatus, the Eagles were re-united at Burbank for the recording of an acoustic MTV special that spawned the *Hell Freezes Over* album. What is often overlooked, is the fact that the Eagles had also agreed to perform a second night on Tuesday 26 April, which was filmed and scheduled for radio broadcast. These rare limited editions showcase that second night broadcast.

FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

Peaceful Easy Feeling, **Best of My Love**, **Tequila Sunrise**, **Heartache Tonight**, **One of These Nights**, **Hotel California**, **Wasted Time**, **Take It Easy** and **Desperado**.

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A track-by-track analysis of the iconic *Hotel California*

Hotel California

(Don Felder/Don Henley/Glenn Frey)

Quite possibly the most recognisable song ever to emanate from an American group in the seventies, this song has succeeded beyond anyone's imagination or dreams. Today this ode to the dark side of modern life has become as synonymous with America as Levi jeans. The guitar interplay between Don Felder and Joe Walsh is nothing short of stunning, and with Don Henley's distinctive – and in this case rather haunting – vocal, the stage was set for a masterpiece. The single was a monster, and live, this song is still the band's crowning glory. Hitting number one, the track remained in the charts for fifteen weeks. Classic stuff.

New Kid in Town

(John David Souther/Henley/Frey)

Written as much about the Eagles and their own belief that life at the top of the pile would be a short-lived thing. Ironically, in their case, they have remained at the top or very near it for a very long time – especially as far as album sales are concerned. Glen Frey's lead vocals graced this track to perfection. Released as a single, it hit the No. 1 spot in the US and became a Top 20 hit in the UK.

Life in the Fast Lane

(Joe Walsh/Henley/Frey)

One of the rockiest tracks ever committed to record by the band, this track had a classic Walsh riff and the distinctive Henley vocal. A great performance by the band, this track has remained an enduring gem throughout the band's career. Released as a single and backed with *Victim of Love*, it became a chart-topping success in its own right, reaching No. 11 and charting for the same number of weeks.

recalled, 'It was the very first album done at Caribou, which belonged to James Guercio, who was Chicago's producer and he owned this huge ranch, about eight thousand feet up, near Nederland, Colorado, which is about an hour and a half out of Denver. At that time, he was getting into the movie business, so he wasn't around the studio at all, which was still being built. So I met him and said, "Look, I'm living round here too, and I'd like to make records here, and I can rent it from you while you make your movie." It was on the second floor of a barn, and it was so new that the bottom floor still had dirt floors, but if you went up to the second floor, you were in electronics city, with best top of the line equipment.'

During 1973, Szymczyk and Walsh worked together once more on a second Barnstorm album with the curious title of *The Smoker You Drink, The Player You Get*, about which Walsh says, 'It was something I thought of late at night, and it makes sense if you think about it.'

The album was a significant success, reaching the Top 10 of the US chart and being certified gold. By this time, the group had been augmented by the addition of two keyboard players, as Walsh explained, 'I didn't want to play with another guitar player, I didn't find anyone I could relate to – I was still using Marshall stacks and stuff, and I thought keyboards would be much better.'

The album included a song that was widely regarded as Walsh's signature tune prior to his joining the Eagles, *Rocky Mountain Way*, which was a US Top 30 hit single: 'I always felt that was special, even before it was complete – we had recorded that before I knew what the words were going to be, but I was very proud of it. The words came about when I got fed up with feeling sorry for myself, and I wanted to justify and feel good about leaving The James Gang, relocating, going for it on a survival basis. I wanted to say "Hey, whatever this is, I'm positive and I'm proud", and the words just came out of feeling that way, rather than writing a song out of remorse.'

After a lengthy tour with Barnstorm, encompassing 330 shows in just one year, the band split up. In 1975, Walsh made what was effectively his first solo album, *So What*, on which he used a synthesizer as well as playing guitar: 'I had one or two rare guitars that I had come across, and I sent one over to Pete Townshend and he liked it a lot. I think he played it on *Who's Next*. All of a sudden, I got a package at my house, and it was a synthesizer, a kind of thank you from Pete, so I plugged it in and stayed in the room for about three weeks straight! I got into synthesizers, and I have subtly used them from *So What* on – not in the context of electronic albums like *Switched On Bach*, but every once in a while underneath the guitars you can hear synthesizer.'

An example on *So What* is the Walsh version of Ravel's *Pavane*: 'It's one of my favourite pieces of classical music. Maurice Ravel was an impressionist musician, and *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty* is part of *The Mother Goose Suite* and I think it's very haunting. My version is all synthesizer.'

So What included help from Don Henley, Glenn Frey and Randy Meisner,

Joe Walsh had worked with the members of the Eagles and had formed a good relationship which, in 1975, made him the natural choice to replace the departing Bernie Leadon.

who also participated on Walsh's live album titled *You Can't Argue with a Sick Mind*, taken from a performance at Wembley Stadium on Midsummer's Day 1975. These collaborations helped form the basis of the relationship between Joe Walsh and the Eagles, and when Bernie Leadon left the band in 1975, Joe Walsh seemed to be the natural choice as his successor. Walsh initially met the Eagles when the same company was managing them, and had been a regular feature in the Eagles camp for a while: 'I met Irving Azoff during the Barnstorm period and expressed to him my concern that I wasn't getting much help from my management or the record company, although at that point, he was in no position to do anything about it. He was also from the Midwest and liked my music and my general attitude about things, and I told Irving that I wanted him to handle my affairs, so he became my manager. Around that time, I was just fed up with a solo career. Irving met the Eagles, who were kind of disillusioned with their management. They also had some internal friction, and the Eagles asked Irving to represent them. The guys in the Eagles helped me with *So What*, and I went to some late night jams with them, when they were working on *On the Border*, and just helped out as a guitar player while they were writing some of that. Later, Bernie Leadon decided that he didn't want to be in the group anymore – they had a kind of stereotype of "sons of the desert"; as the sun goes down over the banana trees and the cactus, you know, and they secretly wanted to rock 'n' roll a bit more. We got together and talked about it for quite a while and the chemistry was really there, but they were scared to death to replace anybody in the band, and I was scared to death to join a band, but it worked out.'

The choice of Joe Walsh as an Eagles guitarist, to many people, was a controversial one. With previous projects such as James Gang, Barnstorm and his rock-focused solo projects, Joe Walsh was certainly seen heavier-leaning than much of the material issued by the Eagles to date. Frey, however, had been keen to harden up the band's sound for a while, and as far as he was concerned, it was a virtual no-brainer to pull in the highly talented Walsh. Rarely has a band found it so easy to quickly find a suitable replacement upon the departure of a key guitar player. Walsh's debut appearance with the band was in January 1976, on the New Zealand, Australia and Japan legs of their world tour. The live results were stunningly good – in particular the new guitar interplay between Felder and Walsh. The overall verdict for anyone who saw this part of the tour was that Walsh was good for the band and that the band was good for Walsh. The new line-up had enjoyed enormous success in the live arena, and all they had to try now was a recorded testimony to the fact. However that task was still a little way off.

The band was very busy living the lifestyle of rock and roll excess, in no uncertain terms. With the band 'busy' and no sight of an album in the immediate future, a step was taken by the label that would ensure that the Eagles

Wasted Time
(Henley/Frey)

A great way to end side one of the original album, this track was more in the vein of tracks of old by the band. It works really well, however, giving the album part of its balanced feel and overall appeal.

Wasted Time (Reprise)
(Henley/Frey/Jim Ed Norman)

And so starts side two, with some great stuff from the days of vinyl and 8-track tapes. This track features a delicate string arrangement and is the perfect way to open the original second side.

Victim of Love
(Felder/Souther/Henley/Frey)

Recorded as a 'live in the studio' track, *Victim of Love* (allegedly) has no overdubs. The track was used as the B-side to the chart-topping *New Kid in Town* single, yet many considered it to outshine the A-side with its more up-tempo and in-your-face sound.

Pretty Maids All in a Row
(Walsh/Joe Vitale)

Joe Walsh made his vocal debut on this track, despite many questioning his suitability for the task. This track, however, is quite possibly the best of the relaxed tracks on the album, and his distinctive vocal sound has stood the test of time exceptionally well. The track was also the B-side to the *Hotel California* single, and it must certainly have generated a pile of cash for Joe Walsh and Joe Vitale.

Try and Love Again
(Meisner)

This was the first song the band laid down in the studio during the *Hotel California* sessions. With Randy Meisner's high vocals, it was another track that harked back to the days of old. Running at over five minutes in length, this signalled a trend the band was to continue on many of the album tracks. *Try and Love Again* has proved a popular slow-burner that works very well as a part of the album.

The Last Resort
(Henley/Frey)

Here we have another enduring track with Henley on vocals. The song features great pedal steel guitar from Don Felder, and synthesisers from Walsh and Henley. The song is a beautiful way to end an absolutely classic album. The band were such fans of this track that they also released it as the B-side to the *Life in the Fast Lane* single.

Left to right: Joe Walsh, Randy Meisner and Don Henley performing live in Rotterdam, Netherlands on 11 May 1977.

became the biggest-selling recording artists in America with the release of *Eagles: Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975*. Marketed in a classic cover, the album went straight to No. 1 in the US and No. 2 in the UK. It became the first RIAA certified platinum album, selling over five million units in 1976 alone.

Work on the band's fifth album, *Hotel California*, was started in the summer of 1975, and the band finally entered Criteria Studios in Miami at the tail end of March 1976. Recording, however, was fractured, to say the least, and it soon became clear that completing this masterwork was going to take a very long time. Producer Szymczyk has looked back on that time stating, 'Yeah, it did take a long time. But I have always considered that we went from the "B" list to the "A" list with *One of These Nights* – that was when people began to think, "Oh, these guys are for real, they're going to be around for a while", and after we'd taken six months to do *One of These Nights*, then we took about nine months to a year to make *Hotel California*, and that was with Walsh. I think the expectancy was also exaggerated by the fact that Joe had joined the band – that brought all his fans, who all of a sudden became Eagles fans, and some of them probably weren't even quite sure who the Eagles were, and thought that the Eagles was Joe's new band. Even to this day [1980], when they play Cleveland, you might as well bill it as Joe Walsh & the Eagles, because in Cleveland, his home town, he's still bigger than the Eagles.'

The band were spending their time cramming in what studio days they could in Miami, between flights back and forth to their touring destinations, and this chaotic schedule contributed heavily to the delays in the album's recording. Despite the scheduling conflicts, studio life was reasonably easy with the new boy, Walsh, as he had already worked extensively with Bill Szymczyk on his past solo projects. Unfortunately, outside the studio they were living a life full of alcohol, drugs and women, the cracks were starting to show behind the scenes.

By November 1976, the new album had been completed and packed in a highly distinctive gatefold sleeve. *Hotel California* was released to the public in December 1976, and clocked over a million copies in the US on pre-release alone. The album flew up to No. 1 in the US charts, and remained there for 107 weeks straight. In the UK *Hotel California* peaked at No. 2, but continued to sell around the world in enormous numbers, exceeding sixteen times platinum in reasonably short order. This was the pinnacle of the band's career as far as recorded material went, and has continued to define their legacy despite an illustrious subsequent career. Iconic to this day, *Hotel California* will always be remembered as one of the Eagles, and rock music's greatest moments.

This article is an extract from **You Can Never Leave**, the Eagles Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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DAVID BOWIE

WHEN ZIGGY PLAYED GUITAR

When David Bowie released his self-titled debut album in 1967, the world had little idea of the impact that distinctive young man would make. Here we look at the musical journey Bowie underwent whilst creating the enduring cultural legacy he commands today.

David Bowie's self-titled debut studio album was released on 1 June 1967, on Deram Records. The album consisted of an odd mixture of Syd Barrett-esque fairy tales, Beatles psychedelia, folk music, show tunes and easy listening. It's an odd mix indeed, but an admirable example of both Bowie's creativity and distinctive voice. In the summer of 1967, music newspapers *The Disc* and *Music Echo* reviewed the album, describing it as a 'remarkable, creative album' sung with a 'sufficiently fresh interpretation to make quite a noise on the scene'.

In the same year, Bowie also had notable success with another artist, having penned the third single for Oscar, which gained significant media attention, as it satirised a series of highly publicised breakouts from British prisons around the same time.

However, it wouldn't be until two years later that Bowie would flirt with some fame of his own with the 1969 release of his hit single *Space Oddity*. Supposedly released to coincide with the first moon landing, it was to be the first introduction of Bowie's famed character Major Tom, an astronaut who becomes lost in space, and is revisited through Bowie's 1980 hit *Ashes to Ashes*.

The single's corresponding album was quickly released off the back of the record's relative success, and was lauded in numerous music publications. In the November 1969 issue of *Music Now!*, the album was described as 'Deep, thoughtful, probing, exposing' and 'gouging at your inners'.

Famed British music publication *Melody Maker* was also quick to praise the album it its March 1970 edition, describing it as 'ultra dramatic', and heaping praise on the single *Space Oddity* in particular, stating that, 'It is more than probable five or six years ago *Space Oddity* would have been given an icy reception and even banned as being sick'. Bowie has always been nothing if not good at timing his releases to perfection.

A week before this *Melody Maker* review, Bowie was also in a celebratory mood, as he married Mary Angela Barnett in Kent. Call her Angie. She was to be the inspiration for many of Bowie's hits before their divorce years later. Later the same year, Bowie released his third studio outing. Rejecting the acoustic-led sound of his previous two albums and replacing it with a heavy rock backing, provided by future long-time collaborator and guitarist Mick Ronson, *The Man Who Sold the World* gained as much media attention for its album sleeve as for the music contained

A young David Bowie in 1966.

within. Depicting Bowie reclining on a couch in a dress, it was to be an early venture into the androgyny he explored more fully in such later albums as *Ziggy Stardust* and *Aladdin Sane*. With much of the album being typical of the British rock movement that was going on at the beginning of the 1970s, *The Man Who Sold the World* also touched upon the likes of glam rock and Latin sounds – sounds that Bowie would use more and more over the following years.

Bowie's follow-up to *The Man Who Sold the World*, *Hunky Dory*, would come out only a year later. The album saw a partial return the folkier sound of *Space Oddity*, with songs such as *Kooks*, as well as more harrowing tracks such as The Bewlay Brothers, *Oh! You Pretty Things*, and the Velvet Underground inspired *Queen Bitch*. *Hunky Dory* was a major foray into showmanship, something that Bowie felt was incredibly important for a pop singer of that era. Speaking to *Rolling Stone* in early April 1971, Bowie asserted, 'I refuse to be thought of as mediocre,' adding, 'If I am mediocre, I'll get out of the business. There's enough fog around. That's why the idea of performance as a spectacle is so important to me.'

In spite of neither the album nor its first single, *Changes*, making a huge impression on the charts, they certainly laid the foundations for Bowie's ascent to the top of the pop world – a world that would give him four Top 10 albums and eight Top 10 singles in the United Kingdom in eighteen short months spread over 1972 and 1973.

> **"I refuse to be thought of as mediocre. If I am mediocre, I'll get out of the business. There's enough fog around. That's why the idea of performance-as-spectacle is so important to me."**
>
> **DAVID BOWIE**

In an interview with *International Musician* magazine in December 1991, Tony Horkins introduced one of his questions in this way, '… it was definitely a reaction to late sixties seriousness, and the real murky quality that rock was falling into. I think a bunch of us adopted the opposite stance. I remember at the time saying that rock must prostitute itself. And I'll stand by that. If you're going to work in a whorehouse, you'd better be the best whore in it.' What he was talking about, of course, was Bowie, and in particular the character of Ziggy Stardust, for it was the concept album of *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* that would come next for the former David Jones.

Taking his androgyny a step further, the character of Ziggy Stardust was a boyish man-alien with red hair and a pale face. Returning to the rocking sound of *The Man Who Sold the World*, Bowie revelled in the glam rock trappings of the era, essentially making the sound his own, with his lighter and faster versions of the typical T. Rex fare.

In an interview with Charles Wooley in 2002, Wooley described the album as being the point at which Bowie's career really took off, and inspired others, stating, 'In the course of events, it was one song that changed David Bowie's life. The release of Space Oddity in 1967 saw his career lift off. But it was the landmark Ziggy Stardust album of the early seventies that launched Bowie into the stellar orbit of rock superstardom. So began a crazy, drug-filled ride that was to redefine modern music. Along the way, the

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FEATURED TRACKS INCLUDE:

Space Oddity, **Changes**, **Rebel Rebel**, **Be My Wife**, **Ashes to Ashes**, **Starman**, **Fashion**, **Life On Mars?**, **Blue Jean**, **Let's Dance**, **Stay**, **China Girl**, **Ziggy Stardust** and many more.

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David Bowie performing in the USA in the early 1970's.

strangely androgynous Bowie invented glam rock, helped launch heavy metal and disco, and even inspired punk.'

The album also garnered much praise at the time; with Richard Cromelin of *Rolling Stone* giving the album rave reviews in the July 1972 issue of the magazine. Describing it as Bowie's 'most thematically ambitious, musically coherent album to date', Cromelin also recognised that Bowie had united the major strengths of his previous works, as well as introducing some great rock and roll with the newly acquired Spiders from Mars backing band.

However, Bowie failed to see that the album was particularly theatrical, stating, 'I didn't really think any of them were that experimental. I was always thwarted by the presumption that the Beatles had done everything anyway, so you might as well just get into the fun of it. It wasn't until later that it became apparent that some of things we'd done were actually quite innovative in their own way, even the choice of musicians. That was essentially eclectic, to say the least.'

In an interview with *NY Rock* from February 1997, Bowie rather amusingly quipped, 'I think that [Ziggy] would probably be fairly shocked that, one, I was still alive and that, two, I seem to have regained some sense of rationality about life and existence.'

The tour backing the album would be, as all of Bowie's later tours turned out to be, wild and excessive. With the character of Ziggy Stardust central to the 1972 tour, the Spiders from Mars were also ever-present. The album hit No. 3 in the UK album charts, and thanks to its success, the previous album *Hunky Dory* also entered the Top 10, actually managing to eclipse *Ziggy Stardust* and peaking at No. 3 in the charts.

> **"I was always thwarted by the presumption that the Beatles had done everything anyway, so you might as well just get into the fun of it..."**
>
> **DAVID BOWIE**

Taken from the July 1972 *Record Mirror* review of a Bowie gig at the Royal Festival Hall, Charles Webster described the electricity of Bowie's performance on the night, even going so far as to prophetically state that, 'David Bowie will soon become the greatest entertainer Britain has ever known', adding that his performance was a 'triumph for the showmanship as well as music', something about which I'm sure Bowie would've been most proud. Finishing off the review in another show of Nostradamus-like prophecy, Webster pronounced that Bowie's 'talent seems unlimited and he looks certain to become the most important person in pop music on both sides of the Atlantic.'

As well as fast becoming the biggest star of the early 1970s, Bowie also began to produce and promote his own personal rock and roll heroes. Lou Reed, formerly of The Velvet Underground, released his breakthrough solo album with the help of production by Bowie and Spiders guitarist Mick Ronson. As well as this, the Stooges, featuring future running mate Iggy Pop as the band's frontman, also signed on to Bowie's management and recorded the album *Raw Power*, which Bowie later mixed with great success.

Following the success of the breakthrough album *Ziggy Stardust*, the Spiders from Mars came together again for the recording of 1973's *Aladdin Sane*. Another conceptual album, this time the concept was that of a disintegrated

David Bowie as Aladdin Sane in 1973.

society. It proved to be Bowie's first-ever UK No. 1 album.

The album was, interestingly enough, written almost entirely on the road, during Bowie's American *Ziggy Stardust* tour, and the cover, depicting Bowie as a shirtless Ziggy-esque character with a lightning bolt across his face, fast became one of the most iconic album covers of all time. The Spiders' renowned pianist Mike Garson also joined Bowie on *Aladdin Sane*, with his performance on many of the tracks making his inclusion one of the major highlights of the piece.

In a review, Ben Gerson of *Rolling Stone* described *Aladdin Sane* as being 'less manic than *The Man Who Sold the World*, and less intimate than *Hunky Dory*, with none of its attacks of self-doubt. *Ziggy Stardust*, in turn, was less autobiographically revealing, more threatening than its predecessors, but still compact.' He added that the album revealed Bowie as 'more mastermind than participant'.

The album was toured, in essence, on the back-end of the *Ziggy Stardust* tour, and was filled with much theatrics and the occasional moment of shock, including Bowie stripping down to a sumo-like loincloth and simulating oral sex on Mick Ronson's guitar. Bowie dramatically retired the character of Ziggy Stardust on-stage at the Hammersmith Odeon in London in 1973, famously announcing, 'Not only is this the last show of the tour, but it's the last show that we'll ever do.'

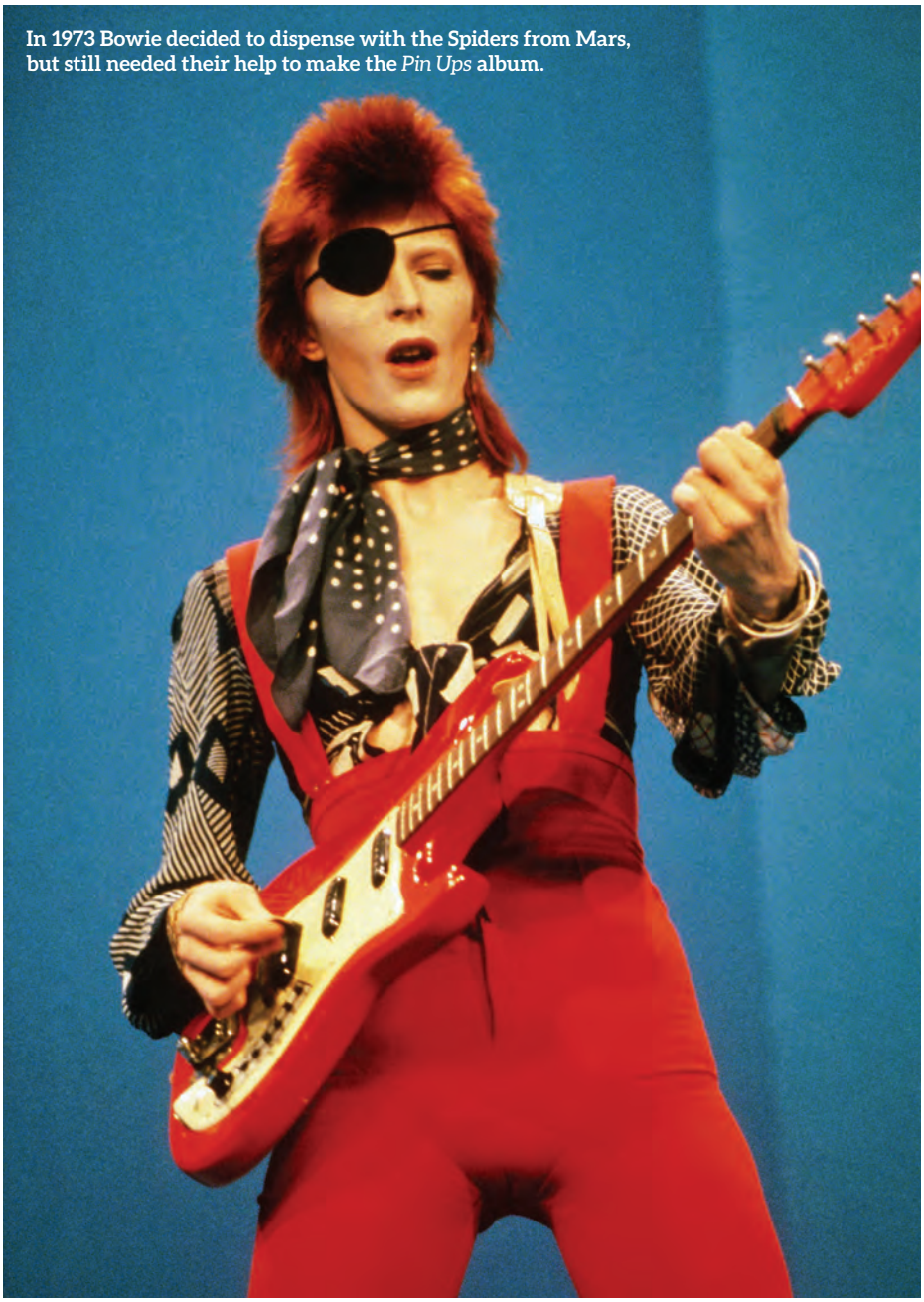
In amongst the hustle and bustle of 1973, there also came another Bowie album, or in this case, the first non-Bowie Bowie album, as he released *Pin Ups*, a collection of cover versions of 1960s hits from the likes of The Who and Pink Floyd. During this time it can be argued that it was Bowie's androgynous stage and public persona that sold records. However, his popularity in gay culture and the emerging gay rights movement also created controversy both in Britain, where homosexuality had only been legal since 1967, and in America.

> **"... It wasn't until later that it became apparent that some of things we'd done were actually quite innovative in their own way."**
>
> **DAVID BOWIE**

Diamond Dogs, one of Bowie's most ambitious albums up to that time, was released in 1974. Including a spoken-word introduction and tracks that bled into one another, *Diamond Dogs* is actually the product of two distinctly different ideas. It is primarily a musical based on a wild future in a post-apocalyptic city, and secondly a re-imagining of George Orwell's famed novel *1984* to music.

As well as the album, Bowie also made plans to develop a *Diamond Dogs* movie. Unfortunately, he didn't get particularly far, although Bowie himself has claimed there is some footage of completed scenes lying around somewhere. He'd also had designs on writing a musical of *1984*, but his interest waned after encountering difficulties in licensing the novel, so the songs he had already written ended up on *Diamond Dogs*.

The album did well, both commercially and critically, and it was the primary example of Bowie performing every single instrumental part on an album. As he himself explained in an interview with *NY Rock* in February 1997, 'That was the first time that I played all the instruments myself on an album. I had just broken up the Spiders and didn't really want to entrust my music to another set of musicians at the time. So



In 1973 Bowie decided to dispense with the Spiders from Mars, but still needed their help to make the *Pin Ups* album.

I tried everything myself on the guitar, drums, saxophone and synthesizers. And so it has a peculiarly idiosyncratic style. I find it very endearing, kind of remote and a bit scary.'

Elaborating on the theme in *International Musician* Magazine in December 1991, Bowie also talked of his first links with soon-to-be collaborator Brian Eno, 'I played a great percentage of everything on *Diamond Dogs*,' he recalled, 'apart from the odd lead guitar, and the bass and drums. But most of the other lead guitars and the rhythm guitars and the keyboards, and saxophones, were just me. That was real playhouse stuff. I just had a ball, with the late Keith Harwood, who was the producer and engineer on that and who was a great buddy. I remember we were running backwards and forwards with Eno, who was in the studio next door doing *Here Come the Warm Jets*, and we were dashing in and out of each other's studios. We hadn't worked together then, but little did we know we both had the same ideas – that everything was shit, and we should fuck it up some more. The main thing was to make rock and roll absurd. It was to take anything that was serious and mock it. *Diamond Dogs*, as I remember it at the time, was trying to accomplish some great mockery of rock 'n' roll. It seemed to be part of my manifesto at the time, I don't know why.'

Bowie talked at length about *Rebel Rebel*, the major hit single from the album, in a *NY Rock* interview, musing, '*Rebel Rebel* is just for me the funniest song. I can't, I just can't conceive how I wrote that now. I mean, I really must have felt that at the time but… "Hot tramp, I love you so, don't give me grief". I mean it's really – it's so flippant.'

Once again, the album sleeve is also worth talking about. This time it featured a painting of Bowie as a half-man, half-dog hybrid by French artist Guy Peellaert. The original version of the painting was actually banned from the sleeve, as Bowie later explained in *NY Rock*, 'They airbrushed the genitalia from the dog. It was by a French artist called Guy Peellaert, who was extraordinary. He put out a book called *Rock Dreams* in that period, which was a great take on his vision of rock artists. Unfortunately, that particular dog, "the Diamond Dog", got castrated. It got returned now that it's out on Rykodisc – he's with equipment.'

The tour of the double concept album came hot on the heels of its release, and proved to be Bowie's most successful up to that point, lasting from June to December 1974. A lavishly produced affair with high-budget stage production and theatrical special effects, the *Diamond Dogs* tour was more of a spectacle than a simple musical event, and broke with contemporary practice for rock concerts.

Bowie, however, soon tired of the whole opulent affair, and when the tour resumed after a summer break in Philadelphia to record material for the upcoming album, the *Diamond Dogs* show no longer made sense, and several changes were made, including band changes and cancelled dates. That period in his career had drawn to a close and Bowie was fast moving towards a new sound.

This article is an extract from **Sounds & Visions**, the David Bowie Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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U2

The Road to War

In Their Own Words

U2's debut studio album, *Boy*, was released on 20 October 1980, and heralded the arrival of a new powerhouse in modern rock music. Here U2 reflect on the road that led them from their auspicious debut to the creation of the iconic *War* album.

U2 circa 1981. From left: Bono, Larry Mullen Jnr, Adam Clayton, The Edge.

The *October* album, released on 12 October 1981, came after extended touring and was unusual for its lyrical focus on the band's strong Christian beliefs.

Of the *October* album, The Edge later recalled, 'Some of it is excruciatingly embarrassing, because of the actual youth of the band. We were so young. It comes over so clearly how inexperienced we were. But there are some incredible ideas on that record, and I'm more amazed at the quality of these ideas, in the end, than embarrassed by how young we sound. *October* itself was a really great little piece. I wrote that initially as a soundtrack piece, but everyone really liked it and Bono came up with this great lyric idea, so it made more sense. But it doesn't sound like anything else on the album or any other album at the time. Maybe that's why it has aged so well… We just got swept up by this wave of what you might call punk, or DIY, enthusiasm: do it yourself, you can do it. Part of that was this concept that it should be "you". So we were determined not to fall in with the same musical styles that so many groups that were playing around bars in Dublin, which was mostly the blues. So, for a guitar player, it was: "Don't play the blues, find other things". Since we were a three-piece, I found that I could play this drone by finding a string that I could use and play against. Playing melodies over one continuous tone through the song was like a real unusual style that I hadn't heard before and that became us. The Celtic aspect must have been in the back of my mind because the drone thing is a very Irish thing to do. You find it in the uilleann pipes in particular. I wasn't thinking about it at the time, but it must have been there as an influence.'

> ***"We were determined not to fall in with the same musical styles that so many groups that were playing around bars in Dublin."***
>
> *The Edge*

Many songs with a religious theme appeared on the early U2 albums. Unusually, as Bono himself recalled in an interview with *Rolling Stone* editor Jann Wenner, the band began their career by writing about God and only later progressed to writing songs about sexual subjects: 'I knew that we were different on our street because my mother was Protestant. And that she'd married a Catholic. At a time of strong sectarian feeling in the country, I knew that was special. We didn't go to the neighbourhood schools – we got on a bus. I picked up the courage they had to have had to follow through on their love. Even then I prayed more outside of the church than inside. It gets back to the songs I was listening to; to me, they were prayers. "How many roads must a man walk down?" That wasn't a rhetorical question to me. It was addressed to God. It's a question I wanted to know the answer to, and I'm wondering, "Who do I ask that to?" I'm not gonna ask a schoolteacher. When John Lennon sings, "Oh, my love for the first time in my life, my eyes are wide open", these songs have an intimacy for me that's not just between people, I realise now, not just sexual intimacy – a spiritual intimacy.

'There was also my friend Guggi. His parents were not just Protestant; they were some obscure cult of Protestant. In America, it would be Pentecostal. His father was like a creature from the Old Testament. He spoke constantly of the Scriptures and had the sense that the end was nigh – and to prepare for it… I'd go to church with them too. Though myself and Guggi are laughing at the absurdity of some of this, the rhetoric is getting through to us. We don't realise it, but we're being immersed

U2 in 1982. From left: Larry Mullen Jnr, The Edge, Bono, Adam Clayton.

in the Holy Scriptures. That's what we took away from this: this rich language, these ancient tracts of wisdom.'

Religion, as well as inspiring him lyrically, also represented a deeper current of cultural meaning to Bono: 'Here's the strange bit: most of the people that you grew up with in black music had a similar baptism of the spirit, right? The difference is that most of these performers felt they could not express their sexuality before God. They had to turn away. So rock 'n' roll became backsliders' music. They were running away from God. But I never believed that. I never saw it as being a choice, an either/or thing. Look at the people who have formed my imagination. Bob Dylan, 1976 – he's going through similar stuff. You buy Patti Smith's *Horses* – "Jesus died for somebody's sins / But not mine…" And she turns Van Morrison's *Gloria* into liturgy. She's wrestling with these demons – Catholicism in her case – right the way through to *Wave*, where she's talking to the pope… The music that really turns me on is either running towards God or away from God. Both recognise the pivot that God is at the centre of the jaunt. So the blues, on one hand – running away; gospel, the Mighty Clouds of Joy – running towards. And later you came to analyse it and figure it out.

'The blues are like the Psalms of David. Here was this character, living in a cave, whose outbursts were as much criticism as praise. There's David singing, "Oh, God – where are you when I need you? / You call yourself God?" And you go, this is the blues. Both deal with the relationship with God. That's really it. I've since realised that anger with God is very valid. We wrote a song about that on the *Pop* album – people were confused by it – *Wake Up Dead Man*: "Jesus, Jesus help me / I'm alone in this world / And a fucked-up world it is, too / Tell me, tell me the story / The one about eternity / And the way it's all gonna be / Wake up, wake up dead man."'

> ***"We're turned on by great songs, great songwriting, soul is the key element… I think it has to connect, it has to mean something."***
>
> *The Edge*

It was 1983's *War* album that really brought the band into international focus, largely down to the popularity of the *New Year's Day* single, a pile-driving anthem which focused on U2's knack for a sing-along chorus, a catchy but simple guitar riff and an expert ability to change the atmosphere from mellow to urgent and back again at the flip of a coin. Much of this was attributable to The Edge's burgeoning guitar skills – he has often been cited as one of the very best players of his generation and has his own unique style that does not involve pointless shredding. Rather, he focuses on atmospherics with a delay pedal and other simple tools.

As The Edge explained of the U2 song writing process, 'We're turned on by great songs, great song writing, soul is the key element above anything. I think it has to connect, it has to mean something, it has to reveal something. Great rhythm, and just great sound – different sounds than what we've ever used before, different arrangement styles and just a lot of experimentation… We always try to concentrate whatever we're doing at any given moment – right now, making our new record – we've got all our focus on that. When we finish, then we start to think "OK, how are we gonna play these songs live?" and that becomes another interesting turn for a lot of the material because in the process of rearranging things for live, you can really strip away the studio textures, the

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Bono on stage at the US Festival, Ontario Motor Speedway, California, 30 May 1983.

studio approach, and you get to the real essence of the piece and I think a lot of the material on this next record will work really well under that kind of a process. I think the material at its very core is really about the four members of the band playing together, so I think it's going to work very well live.'

Bono once said with a grin, 'I have written some straight love songs only to have put them aside because they might elicit projectile vomiting from the great outdoors! So I like love songs that are bittersweet, and I like women to be more complex in songs because that's my experience of them in life. But I think everyone gets it in the neck, don't they? Not just women. I would think if anything I'm harder on the singer than the subject…'

The Edge recalled this period stating, 'We knew when were getting into the *War* album that we wanted something really hard-hitting. It was a conscious thing… It was a big word to use and we knew it at the time. I guess that album wrapped up all our beliefs and confusion in one package. A lot of political feelings, the anger about what was happening in Northern Ireland. Plus the spiritual side of what we were doing was also in flux – we were rejecting conventional religion at that point, because it just wasn't for us. We realised that sectarianism was just another form of tribalism, just an excuse that people were using for killing one another. It had become an ugly thing. We saw a struggle on every front, and that word "war" – as big as it was – encompassed where we were at in our own struggle to try and figure out what was right and where we were going. It was the right word to make sense of a country going through a very hard time, politically, spiritually, in every sense. That album had *Sunday Bloody Sunday* on it, which was our kind of statement on the North. We wrote that song without ever considering how serious an issue it was to everyone else and how outrageous it was for a rock 'n' roll band to write about. To us it was the most natural thing. We never held back on anything. Everything that we were going through went into our music. In a way, probably the only way we could articulate some of the things that we were feeling was through our music. We were really clear that violent struggle was never going to work. We were very angry about the fact that people were still dying in what we saw as a vain, stupid war in Northern Ireland. So our stance was completely anti-war.'

Bono was immediately identified as the spokesman of the band, due to his onstage statements and air of mystique. However, this role didn't sit well with him: 'I think I'm a kind of part-time rock 'n' roll star. We're probably the worst rock stars ever; we've got all the wrong equipment… these arms are stuck on the wrong way. Part of it with U2 is the falling over and picking ourselves up off the ground, part of it is sitting up late at night in Philadelphia and saying something that will put a noose round my neck. I met Elvis Costello a few months ago and he said to me, "I'm ambivalent about U2, I love it and I hate it". He said, "You walk this tightrope that none of your contemporaries will walk – they're afraid to walk it – and when you stay on it I bow my head. But you fall off it so many times". He's right. We do fall off, a lot, and onstage I'll try for something and it won't work and… but it might work, and that's the point. It might work. I've been sensing that I should just shut up. I keep stressing that what's special about U2 is the music, not the musicians. The more we do interviews and get involved in the paraphernalia around the music, the more we become the focus of attention rather than the words I write, or the music.'

This article is an extract from **We Will Follow**, the U2 Special Edition of Music Legends. Available now at **issuu.com**.

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4. **Eagles – Hotel California** 5. **David Bowie – Life On Mars** 6. **Fleetwood Mac – Go Your Own Way**
7. **Free – All Right Now** 8. **Bruce Springsteen – Born to Run** 9. **Queen – Bohemian Rhapsody**
10. **AC/DC – Highway to Hell** 11. **Prince – Purple Rain** 12. **Pink Floyd – Astronomy Domine**
13. **Black Sabbath – Paranoid** 14. **Bon Jovi – Livin' On a Prayer** 15. **The Who – My Generation**
16. **Neil Young – Hurricane** 17. **Creedence Clearwater Revival – Bad Moon Rising**
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